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ORVILLE COLLEGE.

FROM ROUTLEDGE'S "MAGAZINE FOR BOYS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

ORVILLE COLLEGE.

A Story.

BY

MRS. HENRY WOOD,

AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE," "THE CHANNINGS," "TREVLYN HOLD," "ST. MARTIN'S EVE," "ELSTER'S FOLLY," ETC.

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ORVILLE COLLEGE.

CHAPTER I.

IF THE BOYS HAD BUT SEEN!

THE long worked-for Oxford examination was over, and the results were at length known. Irby and Fullarton had not passed; Powell had not gone up for it by the decision of the Head Master; the rest had passed, including Paradyne. All George Paradyne's apprehensions, and the school's forebodings had proved alike mistaken, for Dr. Brabazon had sent up Paradyne in spite of the damaged essay. In his glee, George Paradyne heartily forgave all, and was his own bright self again.

The studies went on again vigorously until July: the great prize, the Orville, had to be competed for yet.

In July the school rose for the long vacation, and Dr. Brabazon could no longer put off the explanation with Mr. Henry, which he had deemed it well to defer until the term should be over. To say the truth, he shrank from it. To convict this hardworking, painstaking gentleman of theft—and such a theft! —was a most unpleasant task to enter on. He let a day or two pass, and while he was seeking for an opportunity to speak, it was afforded by Mr. Henry himself. The heat, or something else, seemed to be retaining its spite against the German master, and on the third day of the vacation, when he was giving Miss Rose her usual lesson, he fainted away without notice, just as he had that other day at Mr. Gall's. He had a short cough occasionally, and symptoms of blood-spitting.

The doctor sent Rose away and sat with him when he was restored, and rang for Mr. Henry's favourite beverage, coffee. "You

shall not go until you have taken some, and the child's lesson can be continued another day," said he, peremptorily and kindly, in answer to remonstrances. "Do you think you can be very well?" he continued, the weary look of pain on Mr. Henry's face striking him forcibly.

"Not very; perhaps I have a little overworked myself," was Mr. Henry's reply. "Sometimes I think this place—the air, I mean—does not agree with me."

"Have you anything on your mind?" asked the doctor; and either the nature of the question or its suddenness brought a flush to Mr. Henry's face. They were in the study, seated opposite each other near the large window, the deserted playground, silent now, lying beyond it in the vista; so that the quick flush was perfectly perceptible to Dr. Brabazon.

"Now," thought he, "for my opportunity: I could not have a better. Mr. Henry," he resumed, aloud, "I have for some time fancied that you had some care or

trouble, that you were concealing especially from me."

A pause. A yearning look of what seemed like detection—detection pleading for pardon—crossed Mr. Henry's countenance. The hour, which he had been dreading for months, was come; and he was not ready for it! He sat in uncomfortable suspense, not knowing how much or how little the master knew, pressing his thin fingers together, his elbows resting on the arm of the chair.

"That some unpleasant trouble was on your mind I have undoubtedly seen," resumed the doctor. "Now that the opportunity for explanation has come, I think you must afford it to me."

"I cannot disclose it to you now, sir," said Mr. Henry slowly, and with evident pain. "Perhaps in a day or two——"

"But suppose no disclosure is needed?—suppose I know it already?" interrupted the master.

"Is that so?" asked Mr. Henry, lifting his face.

"It is. The affair has unhappily come to my knowledge; not, of course, the inducement—the—the leading motive for yielding to the temptation. I cannot describe to you how it has pained me. Had you been a son of mine I could scarcely have felt it more. It seemed that I might so fully trust you."

"Since when have you known it?" asked Mr. Henry in a low tone.

"For some weeks now. I did not stir in it at the time," continued the master, brushing a large fly off his black waistcoat, "on account of not interrupting the classes of the boys who were going up for the examination. And, that over, I thought things might remain as they were until the vacation, as they had gone on so long."

"Then you intend to discharge me, Dr. Brabazon?"

The doctor could not help thinking it was rather an *assuming* question. He played with his paper weight on the table.

"What do *you* think about that, Mr. Henry?"

"Of course I have feared so. But yet——"

"But yet what?"

"Oh, sir, I'd rather not go on. I was going to speak of leniency—of consideration; but you might think it only made my offence worse."

"I will show you all the leniency in my power. I think my having delayed the explanation proves that my intentions are not hostile, and I will be your friend if I can. You were, I conclude, led into this by some overwhelming pecuniary pressure, as others have been before you, and then found that you could not redeem your act. This is Emma's view of the case as well as mine. Why did you not make a friend of me, and tell me your difficulty? I would have lent you the money."

"What money, sir?"

"The money you had need of. It was a poor sum to peril one's future for—seven pounds. And why did you use Mr. Jebb's name?"

Mr. Henry had been staring with all his

eyes, as if the words bewildered him. "I don't quite understand, sir, what it is you are talking of."

"Of my pencil, that you took from this room and pledged in Oxford Street for seven pounds," returned the Head Master in terse language, nettled at the assumption of ignorance and innocence. "Why do you force me to speak out so plainly?"

Mr. Henry rose up; his whole attitude, his face, one entire questioning astonishment. "Why, Dr. Brabazon, what is it that you would accuse me of?" he exclaimed.

"Of the theft of the gold pencil. Of your having taken it out of this inkstand —this inkstand," laying his hand angrily upon the article — "and making money upon it."

The charge was so exceedingly different from the one feared by Mr. Henry, and seemed in itself so entirely absurd and ludicrous, that he burst into a laugh—laughed, it might be, in very relief.

"I beg your pardon, sir, a thousand times.

You cannot seriously suspect me capable of such a thing. Steal your pencil!"

"Yes, my pencil," replied Dr. Brabazon, feeling rather bewildered. "Did you not come in at this window and take it; and then pledge it the next day in Oxford Street for seven pounds, and say you were a master here, and give in Mr. Jebb's name instead of your own?"

"Certainly not. What can possibly have induced you to fancy it? Oh, sir, don't you *see* that you might trust me better than that?"

"Well, I had thought I could," answered the doctor, feeling in a hopeless maze. "I said so to Emma. You see, one of the boys had noticed you that night walking about before the window; and there were other attendant circumstances—never mind them now. I am very sorry to have said this to you if you are innocent."

"Which of the boys was it that saw me?"

"Trace, I think. It was he who spoke to Emma." And the doctor, feeling a convic-

tion that his accusation was really a mistaken one, gave a summary of the details. Mr. Henry distinctly and decisively denied the charge, and the doctor could doubt no longer. But—that no shadow of uncertainty might remain—Mr. Henry urged him to accompany him at once to the jeweller's shop, that the matter might be set at rest: nay, demanded it.

"A moment ere we start, Mr. Henry," said the master. "If this is not the trouble on your mind, what is that trouble? You cannot deny that there's something. What is its nature?"

"Spare me the question a little while, Dr. Brabazon," came the answer, given in a strangely-impassioned tone. "I have been wishing to tell you all along, but I—I—have been unable; and the conflict has robbed my days of peace, my nights of rest. Perhaps—in a few days—in a day even, I may disclose it to you."

"What can it be?" cried the wondering doctor, gazing at him earnestly. "Have you done anything wrong?"

"Yes, very wrong. But—it is neither theft nor murder," he added, his eyes lighting up with their luminous smile. A smile that so strangely, one could not tell how, imparted a feeling of confidence in him to whomsoever it was cast upon.

They took the first conveyance, and were soon in Oxford Street. The master of the shop was in, as before, and listened to a few offered words of explanation. He called the same young man in—Simms.

"Look at this gentleman," he said, indicating Mr. Henry. "Do you recognize him as one of our customers?"

Mr. Simms ran his eyes over Mr. Henry, and shook his head conclusively. "No, sir; I don't remember ever to have seen him."

"Is he the gentleman who pledged that gold pencil with the diamond top?"

"Oh dear no, sir. That person was older than this gentleman. They are not in the least alike."

"Just so," said Dr. Brabazon. "Will you give me a description of that person?"

Mr. Simms complied. "A party getting on for thirty-five, I should say, sir: rather shabby than not, but talked off-hand like a gentleman. Hair had a reddish cast; and party walked, I believe, a little lame."

"Lame!" exclaimed the doctor, in a startled tone.

"You did not mention any lameness the other day, Simms," interposed the jeweller.

"No, sir; I didn't know it then. When I was telling Watson afterwards about questions being asked as to who had pledged that article, he said the party walked lame; leastways, that he limped in going out of the shop. I hadn't noticed it, and so I told him; but Watson was positive."

Dr. Brabazon looked like a man who has received a blow. He went home leaning on Mr. Henry's arm, as if he needed the support.

"Forgive me for having entertained a doubt of you," he murmured, as he wrung his hand at parting. "Perhaps when you tell me of this trouble of yours I may be able to make

it up to you. I know now who it was took my pencil."

And so did Mr. Henry know; for he had recognized the description and the lameness. Mr. Tom Brabazon was the culprit; and had no doubt enjoyed amazingly the joke of giving in the Reverend Mr. Jebb's name, and taking in the shopmen with his assumption of innocent inexperience. Before the time had expired for the running out of the pledge, he would probably have enclosed the ticket to Dr. Brabazon, or to Emma, with Mr. Jebb's name on it as large as life.

As Mr. Henry was turning from the college gate, Sir Simon Orville's pony carriage drew up, himself and Trace in it, the latter driving. Sir Simon ran after Dr. Brabazon, who was then crossing the lawn; Trace, conveniently near-sighted to the German master, remained in the carriage, and turned his head the other way. However, Mr. Henry went up to him.

"Trace, I have a question to ask you. I understand you have been suspecting that

it was I who took the Head Master's pencil. Will you tell me what reason you had for this ? "

Trace felt uncommonly taken to. He had not a great deal of moral courage. " Oh," said he, shuffling with the reins, " that's an old affair now ; past and gone."

" Not quite past and gone yet, Trace. What could have led to your suspecting me ? Will you tell me the truth, so far ? I have a reason for asking."

" Of course it was only a doubt. Some one must have gone in and taken it, and Lamb saw you there before the window. And—you appear to be always so inconveniently short of money as to make a few pounds an object," candidly added Trace, plucking up his courage. " Pardon my alluding to it."

" Slight grounds. I don't think I should have suspected you on such. Was there no other reason ? "

" Except that you are a sneak and a cad," rose to Trace's lips. But he did not consider

it would be convenient to speak it, and answered with a monosyllable, "None."

"Then——was it a kind or a good thing of you to go with these suspicions to Miss Brabazon, my master's daughter? Had the doctor been a different man from what he is, you might have utterly ruined me. A charge of this nature cannot be refuted, in most cases, as easily as it is made."

"Have you refuted this one?" asked Trace, turning full upon him.

"Yes; at once and entirely. I did not know until to-day that it stood against me."

"Then I must tender you my apologies," returned Trace. Not that there was the least sign of apology in his tone; rather, it seemed to have borrowed the haughty ring of his cousin's, Bertie Loftus. "There was no harm done, it appears, so don't let us have a fuss raised now."

"I am not one to raise a fuss. You cannot but be conscious that to you, Trace, I have been especially tolerant—some might say

forbearing. I fear it has been lost upon you."

"You have been very kind, no doubt," cynically returned Trace. "I do not wish more tolerance or forbearance shown to me than others get. Neither am I conscious of having received more."

"No? Yet I have been keeping some of your secrets, Trace. Suppose I had betrayed you in the matter of Paradyne's essay?"

"Of Paradyne's essay?" echoed Trace, seizing the whip and flicking the ear of one of the pretty ponies. "I don't think you know what you are talking of."

"Yes I do. And so do you. When I saw the blotches of ink on your wristband that afternoon, and asked what had caused them, that you should be so sedulous to tuck it out of sight, you knew as well as I did that I guessed the secret. I did not tell of you. It would have been a shocking thing, ruining you with the school and with the masters. Not even to forward the interests of Paradyne in a just

cause, would I injure *you*. I wonder if you will ever understand me, Trace; or get to learn that I would be your friend and not your enemy?"

Trace cut the air with his whip; but he gave no answer. At that moment Sir Simon came back, holding out his hand in his cordial manner.

"You are not looking fat and rosy, Mr. Henry. Fagged with the term: it has been a heavy one. Why don't you do as we are going to do—take a trip over the water?"

"To Germany, Sir Simon?"

"Germany! — that's your paradise," laughed Sir Simon. "We are going to Boulogne—not much crossing there, you know, which I confess doesn't agree with me. We get over in an hour and a half. You should try it yourself. Good day!"

The pony carriage rattled off, and Mr. Henry turned to Mrs. Paradyne's. He had a little matter of business to arrange with her. But matters of business were not always palatable to that lady; and there

ensued an unprofitable argument between herself and her visitor. He sat at the table in the little drawing-room, his elbow on it, his thin cheek resting on his two fingers. Mrs. Paradyne, dropping her work, a glove of George's that she was mending, talked at him from the sofa, and in her quiet, persistent way, allowed no reasoning but hers to be heard. Seated near her mother was Mary Paradyne, a bright-looking girl of twenty, with her brother George's great grey eyes. She had come home in June, having left the school in Derbyshire, and was seeking daily teaching near home. A Mrs. Hill, living near Pond Place, was negotiating with her.

"Where's George?" asked Mr. Henry, when he at length rose to leave.

Mrs. Paradyne would not answer. She was resenting something that Mr. Henry had said. He approached Miss Paradyne to shake hands, but she left her seat and followed him out.

"You are right and mamma is wrong," she whispered, with the handle of the closed

door in her hand, and the tears gathering in her eyes as she lifted them to his. "Oh, I wish she would not be so unjust to you. George is spending the day at William Gall's."

All the answer Mr. Henry made was to bend down and kiss her lips. A very suggestive action, and certainly not discreet. If the boys had but seen!

CHAPTER II.

OVER THE WATER.

THE fine passenger boat was ploughing its way across the channel, receding from Folkestone, gaining on Boulogne-sur-Mer. Sir Simon Orville and his three nephews were on board. It was a fine, warm, calm day in August; and as Sir Simon Orville sat on the upper deck, steadily as he could have sat in one of his own chairs at home, he thought what a charming passage that was between the two points, and how silly he had been never to have tried it before.

For—if the truth must be told—Sir Simon Orville had never made but three water trips in his life: the one to Ramsgate, from

London; the other two, the short crossing to the Isle of Wight. He had called them all equally "going to sea;" and as it happened that the water had been very particularly rough on each of the three occasions, and Sir Simon terribly ill, his reminiscences on the subject were not pleasant. To find himself, therefore, gliding along as smoothly as if the channel were a sea of glass, was both unexpected and delightful.

The sky was blue over head; the water was blue underneath; the slight breeze caused by the motion of the vessel was grateful on the warm day; and Sir Simon thought he was in Paradise. And now, as they were nearing the French town, there came gliding towards them the steamer that had just put off from it; her deck crowded with merry-faced passengers, congratulating themselves, like Sir Simon, at the easy voyage. The vessels exchanged salutes, and passed, each on her way.

And now the harbour was gained and traversed; the boat was made fast to the

side, and the passengers began to land. The first thing Sir Simon did on *terra firma* was to turn himself about and gaze around, perfectly bewildered with the strange scene and the strange tongue. It was so new to him: he had never been out of his own country in his life. Bertie Loftus, who knew something of the place, and prided himself on his French, consequently felt obliged to speak it as soon as he landed, drew his uncle to the custom-house through the sea of gazing faces, and said, "Par ici." That passed, and the egress gained, they found themselves in the midst of a crowd of touters, shouting out the names of their respective hotels and thrusting forward cards.

"Hotel du Nord," said Bertie, grandly, waving his hands to keep off the men, with an air of deprecating condescension.

"But what is it? What do they want? What are these cards?" reiterated Sir Simon. "My goodness me, boys, what's *that?*"

"That" was a string of the fishwomen in

their matelotte costume, dark cloth short petticoats, red bodies, and broad webbing bracers. They were harnessed to a heavy truck of luggage, already cleared, and starting with it to one of the hotels.

"Uncle, we shall never get on if you stay like this," said Bertie. "That's nothing: the women do all the work here."

Up came four or five more women and surrounded the party, bawling into Sir Simon's stunned ears with their shrill and shrieking voices, evidently asking something.

"What on earth are they saying of, Bertie?"

Now Mr. Bertie's French only did for polite table life, and Anglo-French intercourse. To be set upon by a regular Frenchman with his perplexing tongue, and (as it seemed) rapid utterance, puzzled Bertie always: what must it have been then when these fishwomen attacked him with their broad patois?

"Come along, uncle; they don't want anything. Allez vous en," rather wrathfully

added Bertie to the ladies, which only made them talk the faster.

"Bertie, I shall not go along: the poor women must want something, and I should like to know what." What—do—you—want—please?" asked Sir Simon in his politeness, laying a stress upon each word. "Spake Anglish? No spake French, me."

Jabber and shriek, jabber and shriek, all the five voices at once, for there were five of them. Sir Simon put up his hands and looked helplessly at Bertie; who was feeling rather helpless himself just then.

"They are asking if you have any luggage, and if they may carry it to your hotel, Sir Simon," spoke a free, pleasant voice, evidently on the burst of laughter. And Sir Simon turned to behold George Paradyne, and seized his hand in gladness at being relieved from his dilemma.

To hear the boy interpreting between Sir Simon and the women; to note that his French tongue was ready and fluent as theirs

and with rather a more refined sound in it, was somewhat mortifying to Bertie Loftus. The women disappeared, George talking fast and laughing after them. "What brings you here? When did you come?" asked Sir Simon, keeping him by his side.

"We came yesterday, Sir Simon. I am with the Galls. They kindly invited me to accompany them. We are at the Hotel du Nord."

"The Galls here, and at the Norde!" almost shouted Sir Simon in his delight. "I shall have somebody that I can speak English with."

Yes; the Galls had made friends with George Paradyne and brought him to Boulogne with them. Mrs. Gall, a woman of the kindest and truest nature, had told her husband, told her son, that she should make the school ashamed of its prejudice against Paradyne. William Gall had not accompanied them: he was coming later. Sir Simon had known nothing of their movements: he had been a week and more from

home. The Talbots were coming; the Browns were coming; Leek and his mother, Lady Sophia, were already there. As Sir Simon remarked, it seemed like an arranged party. Such, however, was not the case.

"What a lingo, to be sure!" cried Sir Simon, as he trotted up the hot and blazing port. "Why, actually those little street urchins are jabbering French! Halloa! stop!" he added, coming to a sudden halt opposite the goods' custom-house: "Where's Dick!"

Nobody remembered to have seen Dick since the landing. "He'll turn up, sir," returned Loftus, slightly annoyed at the unequal progress they were making. "Dick won't get lost."

Sir Simon did not feel so sure upon the point; he thought he might get lost himself in that helpless foreign town; becoming, as he was, more strange and bewildered every moment. But Dick came running up from behind, dragging with him a tall, square-built man with a thoughtful

face and grey hair. Sir Simon nearly shook his hands off, for it was Mr. Gall.

"What a mercy!" said he. "I never was so glad in all my life; did not know anything of your coming. We have been a week at Chatham, staying near my poor brother Joe, the hop-dealer, who made that sad failure of it. You know him, Gall. I wanted to see how he and the wife and chicks were off, poor things, and we put up at an inn there."

Dick shook hands with Paradyne. Dick listened to the news that Onions was in the town, and that Talbot was arriving, with a sort of rapture: the Browns too, major and minor. Dick would have stood on his head had there been room on the port to do it.

A few days more, and the different friends and schoolmates had collected there. It was indeed as if they had premeditated the gathering. Some went grandly *viâ* Folkestone, some more economically by the boat from London: that little muff, Stiggings, who

was fond of writing to Miss Rose, made the trip in a sailing vessel, invited to it by the captain; he was awfully sick all the way, and landed more dead than alive. The Galls and Sir Simon's party were at the Hotel du Nord; the Talbots had small lodgings in the Rue Neuve Chaussée; the Browns took a furnished house in the open country, beyond the Rue Royale; and Lady Sophia Leek, who had no acquaintance with the rest, and made none with them, was staying at the Hotel des Bains. And the time went on.

But that Sir Simon Orville was the most unsuspicious of men, he had undoubtedly not failed to detect that some ill-feeling was rife between his friend Gall's eldest son, and Bertie Loftus. For three whole days after William Gall's arrival, thy did not exchange a word with each other; on the fourth, a quarrel, not loud, but bitter, took place on the sands; and those low, concentrated, bitter quarrels are worse than loud ones. People, scattered in groups at only a few yards' distance, did not hear it; but they might

have seen the white faces raised on each other with an angry glare, had they been less occupied with themselves, with their gossip, with the picking up of shells. Bertie Loftus was cherishing the remembrance of his insult, and paying it off fourfold in superciliousness now.

Sir Simon's mind was too agreeably filled to afford leisure for detecting feelings not on the surface: everything was new to him, everything delightful. The free and easy life in the French town; the unceremonious habits; the sociable salon, where they sat with the windows open to the street; the passing intimacy made with the rest of the guests; the sufficiently-well-appointed meals in the dining-room—the lingering breakfast at will, the chance lunch, the elaborate dinner —were what he had never before met with. Mr. Bertie Loftus considered it a state of things altogether common; but it was after the social, simple-minded man's own heart. There was the pier to walk on; with its commodious seats at the end, whence he

could watch the vessels in at will, and revel in the view of the dancing waves; there was the laid-out ground before that gay building whose French name Sir Simon could not pronounce, the établissement, where he could sit in the sun or the shade, watching the croquet players, and reading his newspaper between whiles; there was the terrace beyond, with its benches; there were the sands stretching out in the distance. An upper terrace also, close at hand, where he could place himself at a small round table and call for lemonade in the summer's heat. Sir Simon would be now in one spot, now in another, his *Times* and telescope in his hand, his friend Gall not far off. And Mr. Gall was a sensible, shrewd man, looked up to in the city as the head of a wealthy wholesale business; he was not despised by his own people, however he might be by Bertie Loftus. What with the attractions out of doors and the attractions in, Sir Simon thought Boulogne was pleasant as a fabled town of enchantment.

"A scandal-loving, vulgar, crowded, disreputable, unsavoury place, sir!" was the judgment some new acquaintance passed upon it one day, to the intense approval of Bertie. But Sir Simon shook his head, and could not see it.

Sir Simon stood at the end of the pier one afternoon, his telescope to his eye, ranging the horizon for the first appearance of the London boat. He was looking in the wrong direction for it, but that was all one to happy Sir Simon. Young Paradyne put him right. By that boat he was expecting Mr. and Mrs. Loftus. Some business having taken them unexpectedly to London, Sir Simon had written to say, "Come over here and be my guests." It suddenly struck him that the sight of the boy by his side, Paradyne, might call up unpleasant recollections to Mr. Loftus. Sir Simon had got to like the boy excessively; but that was no reason why Mr. Loftus should tolerate the intimacy.

On came the good ship, "The City of Paris," pitching and tossing, for the waves

were wild to-day, and Sir Simon felt thankful he was not in her. She but just saved the tide. Back down the pier he hurried, in time to see the passengers land; Dick and Raymond Trace crowding eagerly against the ropes. Dick leaped them, and had to go through the custom-house for his pains, kissing his mother between whiles. She was like her brother, Sir Simon, in features; simple once, but a little pretentious now. The tears ran down Sir Simon's cheeks when he saw that her hair was grey. Very grey indeed just at present, and her face too, with the adverse wind on deck, and the sickness. Mr. Loftus—a slender, aristocratic-looking man of courteous manners, but with a great deal of Bertie's hauteur in his pale and handsome face—had not suffered, and was ready to greet all friends in his calm, gentlemanly fashion.

There are many ropes about that part of the port, as perhaps some of you know. Mr. Loftus, a very near-sighted man, with an eye-glass dangling, contrived to get his feet

entangled in them; he would undoubtedly have fallen, but that some one darted to the rescue and held him up. Mr. Loftus saw a stripling nearly as tall as himself, with a frank, good-looking countenance, and open, bright, grey eyes.

"Thank you, young sir," he said; "I must look to my steps here, I find. Who is that nice-looking lad?" he subsequently asked of Sir Simon.

"Oh, never mind him," cried Sir Simon, evasively; "let us get on to the Norde"—as he always called the hotel. "Eliza looks half dead."

"But where's Albert?" inquired Mr. Loftus, who had been gazing about in vain for his eldest son.

Sir Simon could not tell where he was, and wondered at his absence. He little thought that Mr. Albert Loftus was detained with Gall, the two quarrelling desperately, out by Napoleon's column. Things had come to a most unpleasant pass between them.

Mrs. Loftus went to lie down as soon as they reached the hotel. Mr. Loftus, declining refreshment until dinner-time, was ready to walk about with Sir Simon and be shown the lions. That goodhearted and estimable knight took him to a favourite bench of his on the green lawn—or plage, if you like to call it so—of the établissement, which seemed nearly deserted under the blaze of the afternoon sun. The sea was before them, the harbour on the left, the heights on the right. Here they sat at their ease, and the conversation fell upon Mr. Trace, Raymond's father.

"It is nearly a twelvemonth now since Robert Trace wrote to me," observed Sir Simon; "I can't make it out. We have never been so long before without news. Have you heard from him?"

"No," answered Mr. Loftus. "But my not hearing goes for nothing. I don't suppose we have exchanged letters three times since we separated in Liverpool four—nearly five—years ago."

"Is there any particular cause for that?" asked Sir Simon.

"Well, I can hardly say there is. We did not agree in opinion about the winding-up of affairs at that unfortunate time, and I was vexed with Robert Trace; but we parted good friends."

"He took too much upon himself, I have heard you say."

"Yes. He would carry out his own opinions; would not listen to me, or let me have a voice; and he did it so quickly too. While I was saying such a thing ought to be done in such a manner, he *did* it, and did it just the reverse. I have always thought that if Robert Trace had managed properly, we might have gone on again and redeemed ourselves. The fact is, his usually cool judgment was stunned out of him by the blow. But it is of no use speculating now on what might have been. How was he getting on when you last heard?"

"I don't know."

The words were spoken in a peculiarly

emphatic tone, and it caused Mr. Loftus to glance inquiringly at Sir Simon. The latter answered the look.

"He was at Boston, you know; had got together some sort of an agency there, and was doing well. In one of his letters to me, he said he was in the way to make a fortune. Some capitalists, whom he named were establishing a great commercial enterprise, a sort of bank I fancy, and had offered the management of it to him, if he could take shares to the amount of two thousand pounds, which must be paid up. He could furnish the one from his own funds, he said, and he asked me to lend him the other. In less than a twelvemonth it should be repaid to me with interest."

"And what did you do?"

"Lent it. I was willing to give him another help on to fortune; and Trace, as you know, was a long-headed fellow, the very last to be deluded by any trashy bubble not likely to hold water. So I despatched him the thousand pounds by return mail."

"You were always too liberal, Simon."

"Better be too liberal than too stingy," was the rather impulsive answer. "I should not like to remember on my death-bed that I had refused assistance to friends in need, for the sake of hoarding my gold. What good would it do me then?"

"And how did it prosper him?"

"I don't know. I got an acknowledgment from him of its receipt—just a line. I believe I can repeat the words, 'Dear Simon, my best thanks to you for what has now come safe to hand. Will write by next mail.' The next mail, however, brought me nothing, nor the next, nor the next. After that came a letter, dated New York; in it he said he had left Boston, and would give me particulars later. They have never come."

"That's strange. How do you account for it?"

Sir Simon did not answer for a minute. "I think the projected enterprise failed," he said at length; "and that Robert Trace lost his own money and mine too. I think he is

trying to redeem his position in a measure before he writes and confesses to the failure. It is no good reason for maintaining silence; but Robert Trace always was sensitive on the subject of pecuniary losses, especially of his own. I suppose the Americans were more clever than he, and took him in, and he does not like to confess it."

"What are you going to do with Raymond?" questioned Mr. Loftus.

"I don't know. I shall be in a dilemma over it, unless we speedily hear from his father. Should he gain the Orville prize he will go to the university; but as to what he is to be—of course, it lies with his father to decide. I propose business to him—any sort he'd like; but he turns his nose up at it, just as disdainfully as Mr. Bertie could do."

Mr. Loftus smiled. "Bertie wants to read for the Bar; but I fear it will be up-hill work. He—there's the fine lad that saved me from stumbling," he broke off, as Paradyne and another shot across the sands.

"You did not tell me who he was. He has a nice face."

"I'll tell you if you like; but your prejudices will rise up in arms like so many bristles. That's young Paradyne."

"Paradyne! Not Arthur Paradyne's son?"

"It is."

"But what brings him here—with you?" returned Mr. Loftus; his voice taking a cold, haughty, reserved tone.

"There, I knew how it would be," said Sir Simon, with a short laugh. Turning round to make sure there were no listeners, he told the particulars to Mr. Loftus: of George Paradyne's happening to enter Orville College, of Raymond's discovery, and of the Head Master's appeal to himself. "The lad is as nice a lad as ever lived," he concluded, "and why should his father's fault be visited upon him?"

A moment's pause, and Mr. Loftus's better reason asserted itself. He was of a generous nature when his pride did not stand

in the way: or, as Sir Simon put it, his prejudice.

"Certainly. Yes. I should have said the same, had Dr. Brabazon consulted me. Let the boy have a chance. But, Simon, how does he get supported at that expensive college? The widow protested she had but the merest pittance of an income left."

"I don't know how. Somebody, perhaps, has taken them by the hand: I can't tell what people of misfortune would do without. I show the boy kindness, not only because I like him, but that I promised something of the sort to Mary."

"To Mrs. Trace?" exclaimed Mr. Loftus.

"I did," affirmed Sir Simon, to the evident surprise of his brother-in-law. "Mary Trace had been a hard, cold woman, as you know; but the light broke in upon her when she was dying. It changed her nature—as of course, or it had not been the true, blessed light from heaven—and she got anxious for others. More than once

she spoke to me of the Paradynes; their fate seemed to lie like a weight upon her. 'If ever you can lend them a helping hand, Simon, do it,' she urged; 'do it for our Saviour's sake.' I can see her blue, pinched lips now, and the anxious fever in her eyes as she spoke," he added dreamily, "and I promised. But I would help the lad for his own sake, apart from this."

Mr. Loftus made no comment: to confess the truth, he could not quite understand why Mrs. Trace should have done this. He raised his double eye-glass.

"Is not that Albert?" he asked. "There, in the distance, with one or two more young men." And Sir Simon turned his long glass in the direction to which he pointed.

Close against the water they stood; three of them—Bertie, for he it was, and Gall, and Leek. The tide was nearly out, and Bertie and Gall had found their way round the point, from the heights down to the sands, a long round, wrangling all the way. Had

Mr. Loftus and Sir Simon but possessed an ear-glass as well as an eye-glass, they might have heard more than was meant for them. That Bertie Loftus was bent upon aggravating Gall by every means in his power, short of vulgar blows, was indisputable; each word he spoke was an insult, a derisive taunt; and Gall, who had rebelled against this kind of treatment from Bertie, even when it was implied rather than expressed, was nearly stung into madness.

"Why don't you have it out, and have done with it?" he passionately cried, stopping short as they came round in view of the établissement and its frequenters. "If you keep on like this, you'll provoke me to kick you to ribbons."

Bertie smiled derisively. Kick *him* to ribbons! His legs were twice as long as Gall's, if it came to kicking. Not that Bertie would have played at that. "There's no chance of having it out with *you*," came the coolly contemptuous answer. "The only way which gentlemen use to 'have

things out,' you don't understand. And you can't be expected to."

Leek espied them from a distance and came running up. It was at this moment that Mr. Loftus's glasses happened to fall upon them.

"Look at him, Onions," cried Bertie, indicating Gall by a sweep of the hand that was the very essence of insolent scorn. "He is asking me to go in for a game of kicking."

"I am saying that I'll kick *you* if you don't stop your row," cried Gall, his very lips white with passion. "And so I will."

"I never did see two such fellows as you," was Leek's comment. "You can't meet without insulting each other. What's come to you both?"

Bertie Loftus wheeled round on his heel in the soft sand, and confronted Gall closely, face nearly touching face. "Look here, here's a last chance—will you meet me?"

"Meet you?"

"Yes, meet me. Don't pretend to mis-

understand. I have my pistols at the hotel."

"Perhaps you brought them on purpose," said Gall, with an unmistakable sneer.

"Perhaps I did," coolly avowed Bertie. "Will you make yourself into a gentleman for once, if you can, and meet me?"

"Why, you don't think I should be such an idiot as to go out to fight a duel, do you?" wonderingly cried Gall, while Leek burst into a laugh. "People don't do that now, Mr. Loftus,"

"Gentlemen do. Ask Leek: he's one. Of course, you can't be expected to understand that. Others shelter their cowardice under plea of the law—of custom—which is so much sneaking meanness. I knew how it would be, and that's why I said nothing before. Why, if you did agree to meet me, you'd steal off by dusk, and give notice to the police."

"Loftus, I am no more a coward than you; but I know what's right and what's wrong."

"Just so. And shelter yourself under the 'right.' Cowards can but be true to their nature."

Gall lifted his hand as if he would have struck, but let it fall again. He was by no means so cool in temper as Bertie Loftus; and a cool temper is sure to win the day in the end. It is of no use to pursue the quarrel further; the harsh and abusive words interchanged would not tend to bring edification; but the result was a very deplorable one.

They separated: Bertie going one way with Leek; Gall remaining on the sands. Mr. Loftus and Sir Simon came forward to meet Bertie, and both of them thought him singularly pre-occupied.

That evening Leek went into the Rue Neuve Chaussée, to call upon James Talbot, and took him out in the moonlight. "Come on the pier," he said: "it will be quiet there, and I want to speak to you. Have you seen Gall?" he asked, as they walked along.

"No, but I have had a note from him,"

answered Talbot. "He says in it he relies upon me to be his friend. I can't make it out."

They went on to the quiet pier and paced it slowly, the bright moon dyeing the scene with her lovely light. An open-air concert was being held in the garden estrade, its coloured lamps flickering, its numerous listeners flirting and promenading. The garish windows of the ball-rooms flung their light abroad—what a contrast to that pure light riding in the sky! Away they pressed to the top of the deserted pier, out of sight and hearing. The tide had turned and was coming in; the wind was rising; the waves roared and leaped against the end of the pier. There Leek told his story: that Gall and Loftus were about to fight, and he had promised to be Loftus's second; Talbot was to perform that office for Gall. Talbot could not believe his ears.

"Fight—a—duel!" he uttered, in blank astonishment, leaving a pause between each word. "Surely they'd not be such fools."

"They will, earl."

"Not with my help, then. I'd put the police on the track first."

"It would do no good," returned Leek, shaking his head: "they'd evade the police. Look here, Shrewsbury, when fellows are determined to go in for a thing of this sort, be assured they *will* go in for it, by hook or by crook. Loftus, it seems, has been bent on it for some time, and he has so managed to stir up Gall, that I don't know now which is the more eager for it of the two."

"And suppose either of them should get killed?—or both?" debated the earl. "I say, Leek, this is an awful thing."

Leek nodded gravely. A little fishing-boat lay alongside the pier in the harbour, stranded there in attempting to come in when the late tide was nearly out; she was just getting afloat now, and two men on board her were making some bustle, talking in loud tones. Leek and Talbot stood looking down upon her as if attracted to

interest: in reality they were absorbed in their own thoughts.

"I told them it was an awful business," spoke Leek, in answer to the last remark, "but I might just as well have said it to the wind. Well, let us talk it over, old fellow. We must be men for once, and do the best we can."

Talbot held out no longer. And the two paced about, settling preliminaries, planning and devising. A matter of this nature seemed to carry them beyond their years; to take them out of young men into old ones. Returning to Leek's room at the Hotel des Bains, they got out the pistols, which Loftus had resigned to Leek, and examined them preparatory to their being loaded later. By some untoward fate, while the weapons were in their hands, Brown major, making a call on Leek, burst into the room. Talbot hurried the pistols out of sight, but the gentlemen were both so confused that Brown could not help suspecting something extraordinary was in the wind,

and said so. In the irresistible attraction that gossip presents, they imparted the secret to him. Mr. Brown sat down on Leek's portmanteau, while he digested the news.

"I'd not have believed it of Gall," he said at length.

"Nor I at one time," returned Talbot. "Loftus has taunted him into it."

Brown major sat nursing his leg, and revolving possibilities. "Suppose bad comes of this, Shrewsbury?—what about you two?"

"What do you call bad?"

"Why, if they should get shot—killed. You might be taken up and put in prison."

Of course it was not a pleasant suggestion. "They'll not give it up," said Leek, with a rueful look.

"Suppose *you* gave up, Onions; you and the earl?"

"They'd get other fellows for seconds, and call us cowards."

"I don't like those French prisons," gloomily observed Brown major. "If once you get in, you never know when you'll get

out. We knew a man who was put in one for ten years."

"What had he done?"

"He owed some money; nothing else. When he had been in about two years, his friends in England clubbed together and got him out. My father was one. You should hear what he says of the place. They serve up the soup in a bucket."

"Nice!" cried Leek.

"*I'd* not run the risk of getting into one," resumed Brown, who was evidently of a prudent turn. "They should fight their duel without me, first. Why, Onions, what would your mother say?"

Onions turned his head quickly towards the door with a somewhat scared look, as if he feared Lady Sophia might be coming in then.

"All you have to do, Brown, is just to hold your tongue, and respect the confidence we've given you," returned Leek. "Whatever consequences come of it, you won't be called upon to answer for them."

"Right, old fellow," cheerfully answered Brown, who was really one of the last to interfere unpleasantly. "You know I'm safe; I was only thinking of you two. The thing shall go on without any interruption from me."

And the thing did go on. As you will find if you read further.

"Somewhere on the heights out beyond Napoleon's column, I think," suggested Leek in a whisper to Talbot, as they were separating for the night. "I'll go with you to pick out a snug spot to-morrow. You'll not fail us at the last, earl!"

"I'll not fail you, Onions. Good night."

CHAPTER III.

DICK'S BATH.

NOT on the exposed heights by Napoleon's column, but a short way beyond it, down in a non-frequented hollow, the meeting-spot for the duel was fixed. Onions and the earl went out when breakfast was over the next day, and chose it after due deliberation. They explored some fields over at Capécure, beyond the lines of rail; but, for some reason known only to themselves, rejected that side of the town. Gall and Loftus appeared not to care where the spot might be, provided it were somewhere. The time was to be sunrise on the following morning,

or as soon after it as they could get out of the hotel and make their way to the spot.

Does it not seem ridiculously absurd to be recording this? But I can only relate what took place; and college students come to the age of these had accomplished such an end before. You may deem that Leek or Talbot ought to have warned the police; but they did not. I think that day added some years to the experience of their lives.

And the two principals—Gall and Loftus—what kind of sensations do you suppose were theirs? Did they look forward to their possible fate—death—with calmness? Was the unruffled exterior, shown to the world, a type of the unruffled mind within? No, you cannot suppose it. Loftus was perhaps the least troubled of the two, for his was the more composed and easy nature; but each had his share of—anticipation.

Why, how could it be otherwise? Try and realize the situation to your minds, my boys; to make it your own. With the rising of the morrow's sun, you are going out to be shot

at yourself and to shoot at another. Before that sun sets, you may be lying cold and dead; your life in this world over; your soul before its Maker. It is very solemn; almost too solemn to write of. When men go out to fight duels, they are represented to be full of inward bravery, as poets have sung and friends have boasted. Never you believe it. Or, if it be so, they have been living without God in the world, callous to the never-ending future. Ah, no! Physically brave, as to the possible flesh wound, perhaps; but *not* brave as to the consequences it may involve—a sudden rush into eternity, uncalled.

Leek and James Talbot were here and there and everywhere—men of importance that day. The fixing upon the meeting-spot took them the whole of the morning. Next they had an interview with the two principals conjointly, and, to give them justice, did all that argument could do to induce the affair to be abandoned. Mr. Brown, fit to burst with the great secret confided to him, and of which he could not talk, went to every

conceivable corner of the town in search of the two other sharers of the secret, and went in vain. He found them at length, when the afternoon was passing, at the Hotel des Bains, in Leek's chamber. As on the previous night, they had the pistols out, and this time they did not hurry them away.

"Well, how's it going?" demanded Brown, breathless with the wind and his own haste.

"How should it be going?" retorted Leek, not pleased at being pursued by Brown major like this.

"Is it off?" resumed Brown, wiping his hot face. "It's such a wind, Onions."

"No, it's not off, and it's not likely to be off. Lock up the pistols for now, Shrewsbury."

"But it's awful, you know," continued Brown, mounting the foot-rail of the bed, and placing himself astride it. "When I got up this morning it seemed to me too improbable a thing really to take place. Suppose one of 'em gets killed? I say, Shrewsbury, couldn't you persuade them off it?".

Lord Shrewsbury gave his head an emphatic shake. "We have been at both of them, Gall and Bertie, and tried everything tryable. You might as well speak to two posts. Let it drop, Brown; it's of no good bothering us."

Brown let it drop, and did it with a good grace: he was powerless. "Have you engaged a surgeon?" he asked.

"A surgeon? No."

"But you'll have to take one. A surgeon's a necessary appendage to duels. Sometimes each side takes it own."

Singular perhaps to say, this "necessary appendage," as Brown major put it, had not been thought of by the seconds. They looked at one another in the pause that ensued. Onions broke it, more emphatically than politely.

"To speak to a French doctor might blow the whole thing. He'd go right off to the police."

"But you can't take two fellows out to shoot at each other without having a surgeon

at hand," debated Brown major, opening his eyes in his simple manner. "Don't you see it, Shrewsbury? Suppose they got wounded. While you were running to find a doctor, one of 'em might bleed to death."

"Both might, for the matter of that," acknowledged Lord Shrewsbury, tilting himself against the tall secrétaire, taller even than himself. "Brown's right, Onions. It's odd we never thought of it."

Onions turned to the window, open to the unsavoury harbour, and stood there in silence. He did not see his way clear on this new point. Not a single doctor in the town was known to him; every one of them might prove a traitor. And, moreover, he had some private doubts of his French, did it come to a delicate negotiation.

"Look here," exclaimed Brown major, briskly, a happy thought striking him; "would not my brother Bob do to go out with you? He is at St. George's Hospital, you know, takes his turn to go round with the surgeons as a dresser. He has his case

of instruments over here, and I know he'd be true."

The suggestion was seized upon, and Brown major flew off and brought back his brother. Mr. Robert Brown—a young man of twenty, with a fresh, good-natured, round face—affirmed that he could bind up wounds and restore fainting patients to life with the most skilled hand at St. George's; ay, and extract a bullet, if it came to that. He gave his promise to keep the secret, and seemed to look forward to the affair as a piece of delightful fun, rather than one of solemnity and danger.

This settled, Leek and Talbot went down on the port, deeming it well to show themselves to their friends, lest suspicion should be excited. When we have a momentous secret on hand, you know, we are apt to fear the world may miraculously discover it. Gall and Loftus were both there, on the plage before the établissement. Indeed it seemed that half the town had gathered on the port, here and in various other parts, to watch the

turbulent sea. None could have discerned anything unusual in the demeanour of the two young men, soon to be the combatants in a great tragedy. Both were a little silent, but that was all.

The wind had been rising higher and higher since the previous day. These London inland people called it a hurricane, and gazed on the sea with an interest that partook of awe. It was indeed very rough—sailors might have said half a gale; but the boat from Folkestone had ventured out, and, after a long and difficult passage, was trying to make the harbour. On the pier, people unused to this could not stand without difficulty, and chose rather the safer watching parts on the plage. Some of the boys were gathered on the sands, near to that little yellow house, the Maison de Sauvetage—rather an ominous name to-day.

"I'll bet you five shillings that she gets in, and that I take my bath," said Dick Loftus, hot in dispute; for they had been telling him he could not attempt that dangerous sea

to-day, and different opinions existed as to whether the steamer would or would not get in. "And here's the five shillings to deposit," added Dick, proud of having so much riches to display, a most unusual thing with him. "Come now, *you*, Onions; you needn't laugh like that."

Onions was laughing to show his ease. He had an important rôle to maintain, and the eyes of the world were upon him.

But for the white fleecy clouds dashing after each other across the blue sky, the day would have been particularly bright and clear. The waves of the receding tide were coming in with a high white froth, breaking ere they touched their extent of way, and lifting their foaming heads aloft. George Paradyne was talking to a man belonging to the "Société de Naufrage," and the rest were listening to the boy's pure French.

"You have not got the boat out to-day," he observed, alluding to the rescue boat that is always in close attendance during bathing hours.

"She's not needed," crustily returned the man, who seemed a crusty subject. "What bathers would venture into this sea?"

George Paradyne glanced at Dick, as much as to say, Hear that. But Dick chose to take no notice, and the society man walked away.

"If this wind does not go down the meeting will have to be put off," whispered Leek, in an undertone, to Bertie Loftus. "The charge might be blown off at a tangent, and take us seconds instead of you."

"Don't be fool enough to talk of it here, Onions," came the rebuking answer; and Bertie caught up a glass and looked at the boat. She was labouring hard; her two white funnels throwing themselves, as it seemed, from side to side, her nose pitching awfully.

But she made her way, and drew near the port at last. People changed their places to watch her in. Mr. Dick Loftus, in secret connivance with himself, was left alone, and he seized on the opportunity. "Danger in bathing to-day indeed!" contemptuously thought Dick. "I'll teach them better."

Not very many minutes, and all at once a cry of anguish broke from the treacherous waters. The boys turned at it; they came running from far and near. Mrs. Loftus, Mrs. Gall, who had much ado to keep their petticoats down over their crinolines, looked in the direction and wondered what the cry meant; and Mr. Loftus came sauntering up. Like his son Bertie he rarely hurried. Sir Simon trotted in more quickly. Another cry! — a cry as from one hopelessly drowning.

"It's Dick! it's Dick!" shrieked Bertie. "Where's the boat? Where's the man?"

Ah, then was commotion. Dick it was, who had been experimenting on the waves on his own account. They ran hither and thither, shouting for the man, calling for the boat; but the man did not answer, and the boat was not on service to-day. While they were running like madmen, all in confusion, Mr. Loftus stood in helpless despair—a very incapable man, he, in any sudden emergency.

But see! While they have been crying

and calling, another has been doing. Some one who threw off his superfluous clothing, plunged into the waves, and is nearing the drowning boy. He gains—he gains upon him! He has him in his hands now, and is turning to battle back to shore again; and a silent prayer is going up from many a heart to heaven. There ensues a pause of agonized suspense; and then a low murmur of thankfulness, gradually rising into a shout of admiration, breaks out from the spectators. Sir Simon Orville fairly dances in his glee, while the tears run down his cheeks.

"Who is it that has saved him?" asked Mr. Loftus, feeling as if the one half of his substance, the whole gratitude of his remaining years, might well be given in recompense. The beaming, generous grey eyes of the rescuer met his in answer, and he knew them for George Paradyne's.

Mr. Dick was conveyed in rather an ignominious fashion to the yellow Maison de Sauvetage, followed by a long tail, who were shut out unceremoniously. Brown major's

brother, announcing himself in obscure French as a "doctoor," was allowed to enter. The attendants placed Dick in one of the beds that the room contained, and a French surgeon, springing it was hard to say whence, appeared upon the scene. But no vigorous means of resuscitation were resorted to, simply because the patient, who was not very far gone, revived without them. George Paradyne, meanwhile, was quietly dressing himself, throwing off thanks and homage as he best could. Sir Simon Orville, however, would not be thrown off. He took possession of him and carried him back in triumph to the Hotel du Nord to dinner.

George was shown to a chamber to brush his still wet hair, when Mr. Loftus came in, and held out his hand.

"How can I show my gratitude to you for what you have done?"

"Oh, sir, thank you; but it does not deserve any particular gratitude," was the boy's laughing answer, as he resigned perforce his right hand, while his left held the

hair-brush. "I am so very glad I happened to be there."

"Where did you learn to swim like that?"

"In the West Indies, when I was a little fellow. Papa's regiment was quartered there. We had an old black servant, who taught me. He used to carry me to the water, and let me sport in it like an alligator. Few can swim as I do."

"I have been very distant to you since I came here. You cannot but have observed it," resumed Mr. Loftus, making the confession as an atonement in his impulse of generosity; and indeed he had very markedly held himself aloof from the boy in his pride and condemnation. "This has made me ashamed of myself."

"Don't say anything, sir. I quite understood it. If my father had been the rogue you believed, it was only what I, his son, deserved."

"As I believed," repeated Mr. Loftus, sad commiseration in his tone. "All the world believed it, George."

"I know they did, sir."

"Well, it is not what I can enter upon with you; and I begin now to see how unjust my feeling to you has been. I——"

"But I wish you would enter upon it, sir; I wish you would let me say how *certain* I am that my father was innocent," interrupted George, his face becoming flushed with a crimson glow, his eyes raised full and earnest to those of Mr. Loftus. "I was only a young lad when it happened, between twelve and thirteen; but I was old enough to judge. Why, Mr. Loftus, but for feeling myself free of that inheritance of guilt, could I have gone on bravely as I have, and done battle with the difficulties thrown in my path—the contempt I have had to stand? At Orville College there has been a dead-set against me from the first—an awful opposition; and I am quite sure that past charge against my father is the foundation of it, though it may not be generally known to the school. When I feel inclined to give in, beaten and hopeless, I say to myself, 'He was innocent, and

I'll bear up in spite of all this for his sake;' and that gives me pluck to fight on again."

"Did you know the particulars of the case?" asked Mr. Loftus, admiring the brave and hopeful nature, in spite of his wonder that any such opinion on the late Captain Paradyne's case could for one moment obtain, even with his son.

"Yes, every one of them," replied George. "I don't suppose there was a single item that did not fix itself on my heart. The sudden discovery—made first of all by you, sir—that something seemed wrong, and then the looking into it privately by yourself and Mr. Trace, and your finding out the frauds, and the arrest of my father. If he had only lived out the investigation, he would have disproved the charge."

"You wish me to speak of this unreservedly to you, I see, as if you were a stranger," observed Mr. Loftus; in answer, as it seemed, to the boy's vehemence.

"Yes, sir, if you please. I used to wish I

might speak to you of it at the time, and get you to look at it in the light I saw it."

"Then, knowing the details, *how* could you, and how can you, fancy your father was not guilty? Remember, my boy, you have asked for this, and I wish to speak with all kindness. He was the only one connected with the office who could have done it. The clerks had not the opportunity."

"Who did do it I can't say, though I have a doubt; but my father it was not," answered George. "I'll tell you a little matter that happened, sir; not much, you'll say. A week or so before the explosion, I was doing my Latin exercise one evening in the study at home, when papa came in and sat down behind me. He was very quiet, and I forgot he was there; but when I got up to put my books away I saw him. He was leaning forward with his elbow on his knee, pulling at his whiskers, as he would do when in deep thought; and he must have been like that, quite still, all the time. 'What are you thinking of, papa?' I said; 'what's the

matter?' He came out of his reverie then, and put his hand upon my shoulder in his fond manner. 'The matter's this, George,' he said, 'that I have a suspicion something wrong is going on in the office, and I cannot make out how, where, or what. I am not up to business, and that's the truth. Either of my partners would find it out in no time.' 'Why don't you tell them, papa?' I asked. 'I am waiting till the sixth of next month, George,' he said; 'that may put things straighter than, to my mind, they are. If it does not, I shall speak to Mr. Trace.' But, you know," added George, his great eyes suddenly becoming wet, "that before the sixth of the next month—September—he was dead. Mr. Loftus, I could stake my own life that he was sincere when he said that."

Mr. Loftus made no comment. It was the sixth of each month that they used to balance up their accounts.

"After he was taken back to prison the day of the examination," continued George,

"they let me go in to see him. I was with Mr. Hopper, and he took me in. I burst out crying. Papa laid hold of my hand, very grave and kind; 'George, I am perfectly innocent,' he said, 'do not distress yourself. I am a little bewildered at present, it's true; and I must understand what the frauds have been, and how committed, before I can refute them. You remember my saying to you, George, that I had a doubt; I wish I had spoken at once, instead of waiting to see whether I was right or wrong. I wish I had telegraphed to the Isle of Wight for Mr. Loftus, and had the whole thing investigated. But that must be done now. Tell your mamma from me, that it is all right; tell her it is a mistake, or something worse, on the part of those who have charged me. My boy, you have never had cause to blush for your father, and you have none now.' I was sent out then, Hopper telling me to wait outside for him, while he spoke with papa. He came out soon, and I went home, and——."

George Paradyne broke down. He leaned

his head on the dressing-table and fairly sobbed. Mr. Loftus touched him gently, and said a soothing word.

"In an hour or two after that, word was brought that he was dead," presently resumed George. "He died with the suspicion of the guilt upon him, and nobody cared to refute it. I talked to Hopper till he said I worried him, asking him to take it up. I went and saw Mr. Trace, and told him all this, but he only shook his head, and spoke kindly to me, and said there was no doubt. I knew there was no doubt, but it was the other way; no doubt of his innocence."

"Will you let me ask you one question, George? If your father was not guilty, who, in your opinion, was?"

"I don't much like to say," was the answer. "And at the best, it is but a doubt."

"I think you had better say it."

"I fancied it was Hopper."

"Hopper!" repeated Mr. Loftus, lifting his head quickly. "No; that was impossible."

"His manner made me doubt him at first:

it was very singular. I am sure that he knew who was guilty; and I think it was himself. And then, sir, you know he disappeared very soon after."

"Yes; that is, he disappeared from Liverpool. He may have taken a clerkship in some London house. But Hopper could not have been guilty. There's the dinner bell. Once more, let me thank you for the service you have rendered my boy Richard."

George Paradyne followed Mr. Loftus down stairs, conscious that his words had made no sort of impression upon him. It was always so: himself against the world. Even his own mother, his father's wife, had never listened to this persistently expressed belief in the innocence. Mr. Loftus knew the theory to be a mistaken one; but he thought none the worse of the boy for entertaining it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUEL.

THE dinner table was full. Old Felix, the head waiter, had caused a separate table to be laid for the party of which Sir Simon Orville was regarded as the head; it iucluded the Galls, the Loftus's, young Paradyne, and a friend of Mr. Gall's, named Bouncely, just arrived by the train from Paris; all, in fact, save the resuscitated Dick, who had been brought home, and was upstairs between a few hot blankets.

It was a very singular thing that the conversation at this side table of theirs should turn on duelling. Bertie Loftus, recounting it later to Onions, called it a "droll chance."

But nothing happens by chance in life. Mr. Bouncely, a ponderous gentleman in black, with gold spectacles, a huge bunch of seals hanging down from a chain in a bygone fashion, and who was an alderman or sheriff, or something grand and great of that nature in the City, had recently been enjoying a brief sojourn at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. He was brim-full of a duel just fought there; had not, as he expressed it, got over the horror yet.

"It arose out of a quarrel at the gaming-table; as quite three parts of these duels do arise," said he, tasting his fish. "Two young fellows of most respectable connections, students yet, one training for medicine, the other for the Bar, went out with their seconds in the early morning, and shot each other. One died on the spot, the other is lamed for life."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Sir Simon. "One can hardly believe such a thing in these sensible matter-of-fact days." And Gall and Loftus, seated at opposite corners of the

table, glanced accidentally at each other, and dropped their eyes again.

"The one, killed, was an only son—an only child—and his mother is a widow," continued Mr. Bouncely, bending his spectacles on something just placed before him, if by good luck they could distinguish what the compound might be. "She has been nearly out of her mind since; all her enjoyment in life is gone. It is very awful when you reflect upon it."

"Poor thing; yes, it is indeed," interposed Mrs. Loftus with compassion. "Every mother must feel for her."

"Ma'am, I spoke of the thing itself; not of the poor mother. *That* is not the awful part of it."

William Gall, passing the water, which somebody asked for, happened to catch sight of his mother's bent eyes; bent to hide the tears that had gathered in them.

"I was alluding to *him*, ma'am; the young man himself," resumed Mr. Bouncely, willing that Mrs. Loftus should be fully enlightened.

What is his future fate to be? Where is he now? *now*, at this very time, let us ask, when we are left on the earth here, eating a good dinner? God placed him in the world to do his duty usefully and faithfully, and to fit himself for a better; not to hurry himself out of it at his own will and pleasure, a suicide."

"A suicide," repeated Mrs. Loftus, who was apt to take things literally. "I thought the other killed him."

"Why, dear me, madam, what can you call it but a case of suicide; what else is it?" asked the City man. "They stand up deliberately, the pair of them, to shoot, and be shot at; each one, no doubt, hoping and striving to get the other dead first. *I* should not like to rush into the presence of my Maker uncalled for, with murder on my hand, and passion in my heart."

"Ah, no!" shuddered Mrs. Loftus. "It is very dreadful."

"He was about half an hour dying; perfectly sensible and conscious that life was

ebbing away fast, past hope," resumed Mr. Bouncely. "What could his sensations have been as he lay there?—what awful despair must have reached him; what bitter repentance! It makes one shudder to think of it."

It seemed as though Mr. Bouncely were imparting somewhat of his own strong feeling on the subject to the table. And, in truth, such reflections were enough to make even the careless shudder.

"What would he have given, in that one half hour of agony, to undo his act of folly, that poor young dying man!" he continued. "He was a Lutheran, and had been religiously trained: 'the child of many prayers,' said a friend of the mother to me. Ah, what petitions of imploring anguish, as he lay in his remorse, must have gone up to his Saviour for pardon! for grace even for him."

And so the conversation continued, this duel being the topic to the end of dinner. It seemed to Gall and Loftus that Mr.

Bouncely kept it up on purpose: when anybody strayed to a different subject, he recurred to this. As they were crossing the court-yard after rising, to go into the public drawing-room, or to their rooms up stairs, as inclination led, some one touched Gall on the arm. It was Talbot, who had been waiting under the porte-cochère. Gall stepped aside with him, apparently just taking a look at the street and at the library windows opposite, lighted up.

"I thought I'd come and tell you, Gall, that the wind's gone down," whispered Talbot. "I have been on the pier with Onions, and it's nothing like as high; so there will be no impediment on that score. We got talking to an old fisherman, and he says it will be calm by morning. How's Dick?"

"Oh, he's all right," answered Gall, speaking more as if he were in a dream than awake. At least, it sounded so, and Talbot glanced at him.

"Are you going to the ball to-night?"

asked Talbot, the whirling by of a carriage with flashing lamps probably suggesting the remembrance of the ball to him.

"No," said Gall; and for the life of him he could not have helped the sudden sense of the general unfitness of things that just then came over him. Balls in one place, duels and death in another.

"Onions is gone. His mother made him go. At least he's gone in to dress for it. She wants to be there once, just to see what it's like, she says. Onions was very mad, but he couldn't get off it."

"Ah, yes," answered Gall, thinking how much happier Onions was than himself. "I must go in, earl; I promised Dick I'd sit with him after dinner. Good night."

Talbot put out his hand; an unusual occurrence, for the college boys were not given to ceremony between themselves, either at meeting or parting. Gall responded to it mechanically.

"I say, Gall," he said, as he held it, and his voice dropped to a sort of solemn, con-

cerned tone, as if *this*, that he was about to say, were serious and what had gone before was froth, "must this go on?"

"Must what go on?"

"The business of to-morrow morning."

"Why you know it must."

"I don't like it."

"Neither do I particularly."

"Then put an end to it before mischief comes."

"How?"

"Why, shake hands; you and Loftus. You are both good fellows, as all the world knows. It's a miserable thing that you should quarrel and bring things to this pitch."

"I have not sought the quarrel. Loftus has forced it upon me."

"Well, you did knock him down, you know. Go to him and apologize for *that*, and perhaps between you things may be made up."

"And be branded by him afterwards as a coward—as no gentleman!" was Gall's

irritable and indignant answer. "Talbot, there's not another word to be said. This was forced upon me in the first instance; but I have taken it up, and, having done so, there's no retreat."

"Then of course I can say no more; but I wish it were otherwise. At five o'clock in the morning, I'll be at the door here waiting for you. Good night. I've got a bet with Onions that he oversleeps himself. What fun if he should! He brings the pistols."

Talbot walked away in the direction of the Hotel des Bains; he had to see Leek yet; and Gall went up stairs to Dick's chamber in pursuance of his promise. Dick, however, proved to be in a sound sleep, so he turned to his mother's sitting-room. Mrs. Gall was seated at one end of the crimson-velvet sofa, complaining of a headache.

He had a headache, too, or perhaps it was a heartache; and he sat down on the sofa by her, and let his head fall upon her shoulder. Mrs. Gall was a little shrimp of a woman, with a great deal of love for her children and

gentleness for the world in general, although the end of her nose was so sharp and red.

"Are you not going down to the salon, mother?"

"No, dear. They will send me some tea here."

"Nor to the rooms?"

"Not to-night, William. Papa's going, I think, with the rest. You are going too, I suppose?"

"No; I'll stay at home with you."

"Nay, my dear," remonstrated Mrs. Gall, supposing his motive was to keep her company; for she was accustomed to much consideration from her children, as a gentle, loving mother is sure to get. "I shall be quite well alone. You must not deprive yourself of the evening's pleasure for me. This ball to-night is the chief one of the season."

"I am not going," he answered. "I did not intend it, mamma."

She lifted her hand as he lay there, to

push the hair from his brow, with a fond movement, and stooped to kiss him.

"How hot your forehead is, William! Have you the headache, too?"

"Not much. A little."

"I think the wind brought on mine to-day," observed Mrs. Gall. "That, and the fright connected with Dick Loftus. William, that's a brave boy, that young Paradyne. I'm so glad we brought him."

"First-rate."

"I cannot think why the college should dislike him: it gets more and more of a puzzle to me. He is very good-looking. Did you notice his beautiful eyes and his flushed face when Mr. Bouncely was giving us that narrative at dinner? He was quite a picture then. By the way, William, what a most shocking thing that was!"

"Not pleasant."

"Not pleasant!" repeated Mrs. Gall, rather shocked at the apparently light tone. "Can you imagine anything more dreadful? A mistake, or calamity, so long as it is con-

fined to this world, is not beyond the pale of remedy; but—when it comes to rushing into the next! William, I am sure that thinking of that poor mistaken youth has made my head worse."

William Gall gave no particular reply; his mother thought he was sleepy, and said no more. Sleepy! with the consciousness on his soul of what he was about to do! with the awful amount of responsibility, already making itself heard, that was weighing him down! There was no such blessing as sleep for him.

It might be the last time he should ever, in life, be thus with his mother. It might be his last evening on earth. Oh, life looked very fair, now that he was possibly about to quit it. Scenes of the past and present, pleasant realities of existence, seemed to come tumbling into his mind with strange persistency. The "old house at home," with its home comforts and home affections; the days at Orville College with their hopes and interests; the future career he had been

rather given in anticipation, to carve out for himself. Why, what a mockery it seemed! Here was he, a candidate (though he had never much thought he should get it) for the Orville prize—long before the time for bestowing it came, he might be cold in his grave, half forgotten! What a mockery seemed all things, if it came to that: his education at all; his training; nay, even his having been born—were this to be the ending! The more serious, solemn part that Mr. Bouncely had enlarged on in the other case, of what might come after death, William Gall simply dared not glance at. No wonder that his brow grew hotter and hotter.

"I'll go to my room, I think," he quietly said, rising, as his reflections became keen and more keen, his assumption of calm equanimity simply intolerable. "Good night, mother, dear."

She was surprised at the abrupt salutation; at the long, passionate kiss he pressed upon her lips; at the yearning, singular love in

his eyes. But before she could say anything, he was gone. Gone to shut himself in his own room, with his troubles and his fear. Not fear of the shot itself or the pain it might bring; William Gall was of a sufficiently brave nature; but fear of the results that might follow in its wake—of the ETERNITY he might be flying into. And yet, so powerful upon him was received custom, the conventionalities of the world; so great a dread had he, in common with others, of being pointed at as a coward, that he let the thing go on, and would not stop it. An almost irrepressible wish had come over him, while he was with his mother, to tell the truth to her; but that might not be, and he thrust it back again.

And so good night to you, Mr. William Gall! Pleasant dreams!

Bertie Loftus was getting over the evening in a different way. Bertie, in full dress, was exhibiting his handsome self at the rooms. He talked, he laughed, he danced; he was so unusually active, so unusually gay,

that Raymond Trace, with his unfailing discernment, wondered what Bertie had been about, and knew he was only killing care. Bertie denied it when Trace asked; *there* was his care, that split he had made in his left-hand glove. "Wretched kid that it must be," he said, with a light laugh. With a light laugh; with an assumption of careless gaiety: but nevertheless every pulse in Mr. Bertie's inward heart was beating with something that was more akin to pain than pleasure; and the loud notes of the music seemed to be so many pistol-shots banging off in the air.

"Be on the ground in time, Loftus," whispered Mr. Leek, as he passed in the wake of the Lady Sophia's scarlet cloak, who had soon had enough of it, and was leaving early. "Five o'clock sharp, mind."

"All right, Leek." And subsequently when Bertie Loftus himself took his departure, he and his party, a couple of coachfuls, and rattled along the port, he looked out at the glistening water and wondered whether he should ever see it again. He might wish

the morrow over; he might wish what was to take place in it could be stopped; but that was impossible. Pride was in the ascendant with both him and Gall, you see; and of course gentlemen cannot act against the *convenances* of society.

The morning rose; warm, bright, clear; with a stiffish breeze yet, but nothing to intercept work or pistol shots. Gall found his way out of the hotel, and saw the faithful Talbot waiting, his back propped against the shutters at the parfumeur's opposite. Gall felt in better spirits than he had been last night, as most of us do when light has chased away the darkness. And, perhaps, he was willing to show himself gay.

"Good morning, Shrewsbury! How long have you been there?"

"Only five minutes. I say, is it not a glorious morning? Couldn't have a better," cried the earl. He seemed in spirits too. It was well to put a good face on what could not now be avoided.

They walked to the appointed place, com-

mencing the route by the Rue d'Assas, and so upwards. It was a good step, even when they had left the town behind. Carriages had been proposed the previous day; but they were afraid to engage any lest the affair should get known. These two were on the spot first. Certainly the seconds had chosen well; the place was appropriate enough to what had to be done on it. It was a bit of flat, low ground, where the grass was short, lying rather in a hollow, and sufficiently secluded. The sea sparkled in the distance over the heights; the open country was stretched out on the other hand; Boulogne lay below. A very few minutes, and Mr. Leek appeared in full spirits, carrying the case of pistols.

"How are you, Gall, old fellow?" he asked, gingerly depositing the case on the ground. "I'm not long after you, you see, Shrewsbury. Where's Loftus?"

"Not come yet," answered the earl. He put his arm within Leek's, and drew him off a little way, talking of the preliminaries in

an undertone; not so low, however, but that Gall might have heard had he chosen to listen. Gall sat down on a gentle ridge of the land, and waited. Soon the others came back again; Onions remarking with an off-hand manner, as if he wanted to show himself at ease, that they should have a broiling day.

They waited on; waited and waited. Expectation grew into wonder. Loftus and Mr. Bob Brown had arranged to come together, but neither came. Had Loftus's valiant courage deserted him at the eleventh hour? Hardly; but Gall felt gratified that he was not the one to be tardy.

As the clocks were striking six, a shout was heard, and three figures bounded on to the heights. Brown major was the first—and *his* company had not been bargained for; on the contrary, he had been expressly told by the seconds he was not to come. But the meeting was a great deal too tempting to be withstood: as Brown major remarked, he might never have the luck to get such a

chance again. Bertie Loftus, in a white heat, began explaining their unfortunate detention. He shared a double-bedded room at the hotel with Dick, and just as he was about to get up and dress himself, Sir Simon Orville, anxious for Dick's health, walked in without ceremony, sat himself down on Dick's bed, talking, and never (as Bertie phrased it) went out again.

"I *couldn't* get up while he was there," cried Bertie, speaking savagely in his mortification; "it might have betrayed the whole thing. You should have seen the Guy he was; he had on grey drawers, with a white stripe across 'em, and a long tassel hanging behind from his cotton nightcap."

There was no time to be lost. It was already too late by a good hour, and Leek and Talbot bestirred themselves with a will. The only one of the party who looked grave, somewhat unwilling, was Mr. Robert Brown. What had been great fun in prospective, was very serious now that the time for action came; and the young doctor felt the respon-

sibility that his two or three years of seniority gave him. Putting out of view the possible consequences, he saw that a large share of the blame might afterwards rest upon him.

"I wish you would make it up, gentlemen," he urged.

Nobody listened to him. The seconds were busy pacing the ground, looking to the pistols, holding communion in an undertone. Gall and Loftus were exchanging a civil sentence now and then, to show their indifference. Both were outwardly calm, though perhaps it strained their nerves to appear so; Brown major, with a scared look in his round eyes, went dodging about restlessly, and rather wished, than otherwise, that he had not come.

"All's ready," cried the seconds, returning to them. Of course they knew very little, if anything, of the executive of such meetings, but were doing things according to their best judgment. "We are putting you sideways to the sun, or else one of you must have had it right in his face," said the earl.

"Do we keep our hats on?" asked Gall.

Now here was a poser. Nobody could answer the question, or say what the custom was. Talbot thought they should be on, Leek thought they should be off. While the duellists stood in indecision, the young surgeon settled it.

"Keep them on," said he. "What does custom signify one way or the other?"

"You must shake hands," said Onions. But he had no sooner spoken than Lord Shrewsbury whispered to him that it was prize-fighters who shook hands, not duellists. However the thing was done; and, as Mr. Brown remarked by the other doubt, it could not matter.

They were placed facing each other, twenty paces between them, and a pistol handed to each. Ah, how little Bertie Loftus, when he bought those pistols in his pride a year ago, dreamt of the grief they would bring him to! Both of them, Gall and Loftus, were now as white as chalk. The surgeon stood on the side with a rueful

face and compressed lips; Brown major removed himself to a safe distance: with those inexperienced shooters there was no knowing what direction the bullets might take; and the seconds as yet were standing close, each behind his man.

"Present!" said Leek, in so low a tone that the doctor did not hear it. Onions might be nervous.

"Fire!" came the next word, after a moment's pause; and that was called out loud enough.

"Not yet! not yet!" shouted Robert Brown in an agony, for the two inexperienced seconds had not removed themselves from the place of danger. "Come away first for the love of heaven!"

He spoke too late. The combatants had fired, each his pistol; the reports crashing out loud enough in the morning air. There ensued some momentary confusion, and Robert Brown's eyes were, so to say, dazzled by anxiety and fear. When his sight came to him, he saw that the rash seconds were

uninjured; but the duellists had both fallen, and were lying on the ground, their white faces turned up to the full blaze of the August sun.

CHAPTER V.

MR. LEEK IN CONVULSIONS.

YES: both the duellists had fallen, and lay on their backs, their white faces upwards, and the pistols beside them. The seconds were standing over them with long chins of horror, and the surgeon came striding up. Gall was nearest to him, and he halted there first.

"Where has it struck you?" he asked, very gently.

Gall, just able to speak, faintly said he did not know. He thought in the small of the back.

But this was impossible according to the

doctor's views. The bullet might have come out at the back, but it certainly could not have gone in that way. As Gall lay there, hardly knowing whether he was dead or not, and the glorious sun shining right into his eyes, an awful remorse came over him. Now that it was too late, he saw how easy it would have been to refuse to fight, even at the risk of being called a coward. While some cast that reproach on him, others would have lauded him for his plain good sense. How fair, how very fair the world looked, now that he was about to quit it!

"Let's see," said Mr. Robert Brown, intending to turn him on his face, but attempting it slowly and gingerly. Truth to say, the operator in embryo felt himself in a bit of a predicament: he had never extracted a ball in his life, and was rather undecided which way to begin. Gall groaned.

"Why, there's no sign of any injury here," exclaimed the doctor, in a tone of surprised pleasure, as Gall went over in a

lump. "The coat's not touched. See if you can get up."

It was what Gall, beginning to recover the shock and his senses together, was already doing. Mr. Brown took his hand to help him, but there seemed no need for it. He was up, and stood as well as ever he had stood in his life. He walked a few paces and found he *could* walk. The surgeon critically passed his eyes and fingers over him, and came to the conclusion that—he was not injured.

"You are not hurt; you were not struck at all," he cried, and the tears actually came into Mr. Bob's Brown's eyes, so glad and great was the relief. "The bullet must have passed you."

He, Robert Brown, flew off to the other wounded man, Bertie Loftus. Bertie was on his feet too, under convoy of Onions and Brown major. Very much the same ceremony had been gone through with him. A moment or two he had lain as one dead, he also having been struck (as he believed) in the small of

the back, but had got upon his feet without help, though with much condolence.

"Why, you are not hurt, either!" shouted Mr. Robert Brown, in his astonishment. "Where on earth can the bullets have gone?"

It was quite true; they were *not* hurt. As to the bullets—they must have gone somewhere.

"What made you fall?" reiterated the surgeon, whose delight at this result caused his face to glow with a red like the early rising sun. Neither of them could say. Each thought he had been struck in the back; each had felt the shot there. Bertie repeated this aloud: Gall said nothing. Gall was wondering how he could ever be thankful enough to Heaven that he was in the world yet. How fair it was! how lovely looked the line of horizon over the dark-blue sea!

"I—don't—think—there—has—been—any—duel," slowly spoke Mr. Robert Brown, when he revolved matters. "Did they forget to load the pistols?"

"If there has been no real duel they must be put up again," volubly interposed Brown major, quite forgetting, in this agreeable termination, his recent fears. "Where was the good of all the bother? Where's the use of going in for satisfaction if you don't get satisfaction? My heart alive, who's this?"

Who indeed! Brown major's startled question was caused by the appearance of a stranger on the scene. He came puffing up at a sharp pace, and Bertie nearly dropped into his shoes at the apparition: for it was his uncle, Sir Simon. And Sir Simon had heard the report of the pistols too, and took in the truth at a glance. The young surgeon, some view perhaps of self-exculpation in his mind, explained the affair in a few brief words, and dwelt upon the fact that no harm had come of it.

"You two wicked ones!" exclaimed the really shocked and scared Sir Simon to Gall and Loftus. "Give me up those pistols, sir," he sternly continued to his nephew.

"They shall never be in your possession again."

It was easy to say, Give me the pistols. But the pistols had disappeared, and Bertie's second with them. Before Sir Simon was seen, or thought of, Mr. Leek had hastily shut the pistols into their case, and glided quietly away with them, unobserved.

"Where are the pistols?" roared Sir Simon.

"Onions must have gone off with them," cried Brown major, who seemed more at his ease altogether than any of the rest.

Lissom and surefooted as any cat, Onions was then making his way down the almost perpendicular descent between Napoleon's column and the sands, the case of pistols safe in his hands. When the descent was effected he sat down, partly to recover breath, partly to burst into vehement laughter. Swaying his body from side to side it seemed that he never would leave off, to the intense astonishment of a fisherman going by with three mackerel dangling in his

hand from a string, who stopped to gaze at him.

Never, sure, did a pair of duellists take their way off the field more ignominiously than ours! For nothing to have come of the meeting was sufficiently crest-lowering on the surface, whatever the inward satisfaction might have been; but to be exposed the whole way to the fire of Sir Simon's tongue —now thundering forth its condemning anger, now sunk in ironical raillery—was hardly to be borne. He treated them like a couple of children. In the first place he made them walk arm in arm, and march before him; himself, the acting surgeon, Brown major, and Lord Shrewsbury, bringing up the rear like so many policemen. Thus they made their way home, taking the route through the Upper Town and down the Grande Rue, for Sir Simon would go no other way. Arrived at the hotel, the others having dropped off on the road, he marshalled them into his own room, shut himself in with them, and talked to the two; not in the

angry or ironical strain he had been using publicly, but in a solemn, severe, and yet kind tone, with the tears of emotion running down his cheeks.

"Shake hands, and be thankful to God," he wound up with, "for a great mercy has been vouchsafed to you both this day. But for that, you might just as well have been lying stark upon the heights now."

He never supposed but that the pistols had been loaded with bullets. Any doubt to the contrary had not been whispered to him. And the fact, as to whether they had or not, remained yet to be proved.

But the occurrence spoilt the pleasure in Boulogne. It was looked upon in a very grave light by both the families concerned, and they resolved to cut the visit short and return home. Sir Simon made a call upon Onions, and demanded the pistols, which were given up to him. Never again were they seen by Bertie Loftus; and what Sir Simon did with them Bertie could not get to know, but always thought he dropped

them into the waves of the receding tide, and let them drift out to sea.

Onions was back in London before they were. Lady Sophia Leek, grown tired of her visit, as it was natural to her to grow, wherever she went, crossed over the day before the large party. It was quite the same to Onions whether she stayed or returned home. He made himself happy anywhere.

Let us take a look at Mr. Henry. While they and others had been amusing themselves, he was working as usual. He gave his private lessons, he finished his translation, he accomplished certain work that Mr. Baker had asked him to do as a favour—the working out of some difficult problems in Euclid. "You are as capable as I am, Henry," said the mathematical master, "and I want to go into Wales and see my poor old father." And Mr. Henry had accepted the task with a patient sigh.

Yes, the translation was finished at last. It had been a stupendous labour, considering

the little time Mr. Henry could give to it and the many abstruse books he had been obliged to consult. Had he foreseen what the task would be, he might not have entered upon it. And he had made too light, by anticipation, of his legitimate work in the college, for that had been greatly added to by the ill-will of the boys. All the trouble and labour they possibly could give to him, they did give. Many and many a night, when he might have been at his translation, was he detained over their wretchedly false exercises; rendered purposely as incorrect, and also as illegible, as it was possible for the malice of schoolboys to render them. Mr. Henry had felt ill for some time now. It was hot summer weather, and yet a sort of ague was upon him; but he did what he could to shake it off.

And that was a red-letter day when, the translation completed, he set out with it for London. It happened to be the same day that Sir Simon and his large party were crossing over from Boulogne; but that had

nothing to do with Mr. Henry. The sun was bright, the skies were clear; his ailments and his weakness, the weary night vigils, and the past fatigue in his labours, all were alike forgotten, as he bore on to the publisher's house in Paternoster Row, and passed at length through its swing doors, carrying his heavy parcel.

"Would you like to receive the money now?" inquired the publisher, after he had talked with him.

"If you please. If not inconvenient."

Not inconvenient certainly to pay thirty pounds; and the money, in five-pound notes, was given into his hand. "We shall send the proofs to you, Mr. Henry; no one but yourself must correct them."

"Very well. You will present me with a copy of the book for my own use?"

"One copy, sir! You shall have more than that, and be welcome to them. Half a dozen if you like."

"Thank you very much. Then I can give

a copy to Dr. Brabazon, and send over another to my old university."

He went out, his eyes quite luminous with the pleasure. The money in his pocket; the learned book (it might almost be called *his* book, so great had been his labour) coming out immediately; copies to give to his friends! For once Mr. Henry forgot his care, and seemed to tread on air.

But he could not live on air; and hunger was very powerfully reminding him of that fact when he reached the Strand. He looked out for an eating-house, and turned into Simpson's. Ordering a plateful of lamb and peas (recommended by the waiter), he went out again to a shop close by, to buy some trifle he wanted. As he was bounding back into Simpson's, he found his coat tails seized, and turned to see a boy in the College cap. It was Leek.

"Why, Onions!" he exclaimed, calling him, in his surpise, by the more familiar name, "I thought you were in France. George

Paradyne wrote to me a day or two ago, and mentioned you."

"We came over yesterday; Lady Sophia got tired of the place," answered Onions. "The rest are crossing to-day: I mean Loftus and Gall's lot," he went on to explain with the customary scant ceremony of the College boys. "Oh, Mr. Henry, we have had the jolliest lark! I should like to tell it you."

"Do so," said Mr. Henry. "I am going to have some dinner: will you take some with me?"

"Don't care if I do," returned Onions. "Lamb and peas! That's good, after the kickshaws we've had in France. You'll laugh yourself into a fit when you hear what happened there."

Seated at a table in the corner, Onions recounted his story, and eat his lamb and peas between whiles. Mr. Henry treated him also to some cherry tart. Onions eat and talked, and exploded into bursts of laughter, contagious to see and hear. The

diners in the room turned and looked; there seemed some danger of his going into a fit himself. It was the duel he was telling of, and Mr. Henry, when the boy first began, truly thought he was recounting a fable: though it is possible, having been acclimatized to Germany, that he did not feel so shocked at the idea of the duel as the other masters might have felt; say the Reverend Mr. Jebb, for instance, or Dr. Brabazon.

"You see, when they asked me and Lord Shrewsbury to stand seconds, we didn't much like it. Suppose one of them had got killed? But it was of no use our saying a syllable: Gall and Loftus are both just as obstinate as pigs, and a comet with a fiery tail wouldn't have turned either of them. They thought their honour was involved, you see. Oh, and what do you think? Dick went into the sea during a gale, and was all but drowned."

"Dick was!"

"And Paradyne saved him," continued Onions, having got out of one tale into another. "Nobody saw Dick go in, or knew

he was in, until his cries were heard. It was too rough for bathers to venture that day, and the Sauvetage boat was not on duty, but Dick thought he'd try it on the sly. And there he was, drowning without help! While the rest of us were rushing about wildly to find the men, Paradyne quietly threw off his jacket, plunged in, and went swimming after him—and a deuce of a long way Dick had drifted out with the tide. He is a brave fellow after all, that Paradyne. You should have heard the cheers when he came in with Dick!"

Mr. Henry was leaning back in his chair, absorbed in the narrative—a hectic flush on his cheeks, a glowing light in his eyes. Praises of George Paradyne stirred every fibre of his heart.

"George never said a word of this in his letter to me."

"Oh, I daresay not; he's not a fellow to talk of himself," was Mr. Leek's answer. "You never saw such a swimmer. Well, Dick was saved. We wondered afterwards

whether, if he had been drowned, it would have stopped the duel."

"And the duel really took place? It seems past all belief," continued Mr. Henry. And Onions, his mouth full of pie, went into convulsions again, and upset the beer. When the choking was over, he continued his account.

"I and Shrewsbury laid our heads together; we didn't want, you know, to aid them in going in for such a chance as *death*. Besides, duelling is over, let Bertie Loftus say what he will. We agreed *not to load the pistols;* but that fool of a Brown major got putting his tongue into it, saying we must take a surgeon. We couldn't say we'd not, for fear of exciting suspicion, and he proposed his big brother who is at St. George's, and we took him. What we feared was, that he might get looking to the pistols; which would have spoilt the game. He didn't though, and was in an awful fright all the time. He placed our men at the distance of twenty paces—you should have seen the com-

batants; the two were as white as this table cloth—and gave the signal to fire. At the moment the pistols went off I gave Loftus a smart knock in the back with some pieces of brass that jangled frightfully; Talbot gave Gall the same, and down the two went, thinking they were both shot. Oh my goodness! I shall never get over it to the last hour of my life," broke off Onions, struggling and spluttering. "Mr. Henry, if I were in church,—if I were watching somebody dead, — if I were before the examiners for the Oxford, and thought of it, I must laugh."

It seemed so, by the way he was laughing now.

"They thought they were shot, and there they lay; and Bob Brown came up with a long face, getting out his case of instruments. 'Where are you struck?' says he, beginning with Gall who was nearest him; 'whereabouts has the bullet gone into you?' 'I think it went into my back,' says Gall, with a groan. 'Let's see,' says Brown, delicately

turning him a little, 'perhaps it came out there? No, there's no hole in your coat at the back. Why, you're not shot at all!' he shouts out, as Gall got up and felt himself. Oh my stars, but it was rich! I and the earl had to keep our countenances, and nearly died of it."

Mr. Henry was laughing quietly; and the crowded room turned round once more and gazed at the College lad.

"I made off with the pistols. That had been arranged. Oh, I assure you we laid the programme well, and rehearsed our parts over and over. My mother walked me off to a miserable ball the previous night; but Lord Shrewsbury came to sleep in my room, and we were practising the thrust upon each other's backs till daylight. We got a brass candlestick out of Lady Sophia's chamber and battered it up for the pieces; the hotel people, finding it had disappeared, thought my Lady must have swallowed it. I've got the brass yet."

He laid his head down on the table, not

exactly after a public fashion; shaking and convulsed. "Go on," said Mr. Henry.

"There's no more fun to tell. I made off with the pistols, for fear they should find out the trick, and fight in earnest—but they must have gone to the town for bullets first. Sir Simon Orville came on the scene then, and ——."

"Who had warned him of it?"

"Nobody. His coming was accidental. He went in early to Dick's room, to see how he was, and dressed himself afterwards to take a walk, instead of getting into bed again like a Christian; and somehow arrived at the spot by chance. Wasn't there a row? Shrewsbury says he never heard any old fellow go on so. He made Gall and Loftus shake hands, and marched them home again before him arm in arm. That same day he came to me, demanding the pistols, and threatened to tell Lady Sophia of me unless I promised never to help in such an affair of iniquity again: that was what he called it, 'an affair of iniquity.' So I gave him up

the pistols, and told him the truth at the same time—that I and Talbot had not put any charge in them. You should have watched the change in him! He called me all sorts of charming names, and shook my hand, turning himself about with delight in his funny fashion, and said he'd be my friend always and Talbot's too; and then he put his hand into his pocket and gave me—what do you think?—five golden sovereigns. But he took the pistols; and Loftus's belief is, that he pitched them, case and all, into the harbour. Oh, it was a lark, that duel! I don't believe I shall ever get in for such another."

It was the conclusion of the tale. The company, who had remained at the different tables, as if fascinated, began to move. They had caught but a word here and there, and rose up impressed with the idea that a peer of England, the Right Honourable the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, had been one of the principals in a duel; which news they forthwith carried to their friends. There

are people who believe to this day that his lordship was the culprit. Mr. Henry paid for his dinner, and went out with Leek. They were parting, for their way was not the same, when the master laid his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"I wish I could get you to do me a favour, Leek."

"That I will," was the ready answer. "What is it?"

"Make my duties easy to me next term, instead of difficult. That is, help to make them so. No one but myself, Leek, knows what I have to battle with. Sometimes I think it is wearing me out."

"Are you ill?" exclaimed Leek, suddenly noticing, now that they were in the sunlight, the peculiarly worn look on the quiet and refined face.

"I am not very well. Perhaps I may give up my post in the College."

"I say, though, you don't mean that! Are we boys driving you away?"

"That, and other things. I don't know

how it will be yet. But if I remain, I must get you all to behave differently."

"And so we will," cried Leek, in a generous fit of repentance, and some shame; as he remembered the impediments it had been their delight to throw into the way of the foreign master, and how patiently he had borne it all. Leek could not help being struck with the look of *goodness*, of truth in the face before him, though it might never have struck him particularly before; and it suddenly occurred to him to wonder whether they had been mistaken on sundry little matters. A man who has just treated us to a good dinner can't be a bad man.

"Mr. Henry, was it you that told of the seniors smoking, when there was that row last autumn term?" he asked impulsively.

"It was not. I answered this at the time."

"Then I'm blest if I don't believe it was Lamb, after all! He's a beauty. And I daresay other things that they said of you were as untrue?"

"I daresay they were," replied Mr. Henry, smiling.

"What a jolly shame! Don't go away because of us, Mr. Henry. It was all Trace's fault."

"Ay. Good bye," he kindly added, as he walked away to catch an omnibus that would take him to Orville.

He went to Mrs. Paradyne's on his arrival there. That lady was alone, evidently in a very aggrieved temper. She sat in her usual place on the sofa, in a once handsome but now faded muslin gown, garnished with sea-green ribbons. Her bonnet lay on the table.

"What is the matter?" inquired Mr. Henry.

"The matter is, that Mary has not come home, and she knows she was to have gone out with me," was Mrs. Paradyne's fretful answer. "I can't think what is keeping her. Mrs. Hill should not do it."

He sat down by her on the sofa, reached out his pocket-book, and gave her five of the bank notes lying in it. "I took my

translation in to-day," was all he said. Mrs. Paradyne began counting them. She looked up.

"I thought you were to receive thirty pounds for it. You have always said so."

"I did receive thirty. But——"

"You have given me only twenty-five," came the quick interruption; and the tone was not a pleasant one.

"I have kept one of the notes. I am sorry to have to do so, but I want it."

"Want it for *what?*" she asked with a surprised stress upon the word. "But a day or two ago you informed me you had no need of money just now."

"True. I will tell you if you wish particularly to know," he continued; for she was looking at him questionably, and evidently waiting for the information, as one might who had a right to it. "You have heard me speak of Carl Weber?"

"That great friend and fellow-professor of yours at Heidelberg. Well?"

"I had a letter from him yesterday,

telling me how much worse he is, and that his malady is now confirmed beyond doubt—consumption. I had another letter; it was from young Von Sark, who happened to write to me. He spoke of Weber in it; of the sad state of privation he is in, of the inroads the disease is making, and of his almost utter want of friends. He has been ill so long that people have grown tired of assisting him. A five-pound note will lighten his way to death."

Mrs. Paradyne made no dissentient answer; but she was evidently not pleased. Taking out her purse with almost an unlady-like jerk, she shut the five bank-notes into it with a sharp click.

"I cannot help it," said Mr. Henry in a low tone. "He is in great need, and friendless. It seems to be a duty placed before me."

"Has he been improvident, that he should have saved no means?" asked Mrs. Paradyne.

"No; his salary was small, and he had

his mother to keep," was Mr. Henry's reply, looking away from Mrs. Paradyne for a moment. "She died two months ago; the last of his relatives."

"Well, your giving away a bank-note more or less is of little consequence," resumed Mrs. Paradyne, in a displayed sort of resignation, but which bore a sound of irony to initiated ears. "You will not earn many more bank notes, if you persist in your insane resolution of speaking to Dr. Brabazon."

"I have told you why I must do that," he gently said; "do not let us go over the matter again. As soon as he returns from Malvern, I shall declare all. I have no resource but to do it, and no argument can now change my resolution."

"Or bring you to your senses," retorted Mrs. Paradyne.

"I have something to tell you that will please you very much," he resumed, quitting the other subject.

Mrs. Paradyne lifted her delicate hands in

dissenting deprecation, as if nothing could ever please her again.

"It is a story of George's bravery. He has been saving the life of young Loftus."

CHAPTER VI.

TOLD AT LAST.

IN passing the College gates on his way homewards, after quitting Mrs. Paradyne, Mr. Henry, very much to his surprise, saw Dr. Brabazon going in. No further explanation had taken place between them; for the doctor had been staying at Malvern with his daughters. He held out his hand to the young German master.

"You are looking as much astonished as if you thought I was my own ghost," cried he, jestingly.

"Well, sir, I should almost as soon have expected to see it. I thought you were at Malvern."

"A little matter of business brought me up. I go back to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" echoed Mr. Henry. "Can you let me speak to you before you go back?" he continued on sudden impulse.

"Certainly. Come in with me now if you like."

Dr. Brabazon led the way to his favourite room, the study, and they sat down there in the subdued light of the summer's evening. The sun had set; a crimson glow lingered in the west, and the evening star shone in the clear sky. Perhaps Mr. Henry was glad of the semi-light; it is the most welcome of all for an embarrassing interview.

"I have been anxious for you to return," he began in a low, distinct tone. "I did not like to make my communication to you by letter, and yet there was little time to spare."

"Why was there little?" interrupted the master.

"Because, sir, you may have occasion to look out for some one to replace me in the College."

"Are you going to leave?"

"Not of my own accord; but you will in all probability dismiss me when you have heard my confession."

He made a pause, but the doctor, waiting for more, did not break it. They were, as usual, near the window, and what light there was fell full on Mr. Henry. His hands lay on his knee listless; his face was bent, in its sad earnestness, towards the master. A strange look of contrition was upon it.

"I hardly know which you would deem the worse crime, Dr. Brabazon," he resumed; "the theft you were led to suspect me of, or the real offence of which I am guilty. I have not stolen property; but my whole life since I came here has been one long-acting deceit."

"Why, what can you mean?" exclaimed the doctor, who had nearly forgotten that there remained anything to explain, and was again putting full trust in his German master.

"Deceit especially to you, and in a degree to others," came the reply. "I am not Mr.

Henry. Henry is only one of my Christian names. I am Arthur Paradyne."

The doctor sat staring. "You are——; I don't understand," he cried, breaking off in hopeless bewilderment.

"I am Arthur Henry Paradyne, son to the unfortunate gentleman who was associated with the firm of Loftus and Trace in Liverpool; son to Mrs. Paradyne; brother to Mary and George."

"Why, bless my heart!" slowly exclaimed the master, when he had taken in the sense of the words; and then he came to a full stop, and fell into his sea of bewilderment again.

"I never intended to deceive you—never;" resumed the young man. "When I came over to enter on the situation here, I fully meant to disclose to you that I was Arthur Paradyne. The name had not been concealed by any premeditation; but—if I may so express it—in the ordinary course of things. I was always called 'Henry' at the university, and in the town of Heidelberg.

My father at one time was living there; he was Mr. Paradyne with the Germans—for they often forgot to give him his title of captain—I, by way of distinction, was called Mr. Henry. It is a foreign custom. In my case it grew into entire use; and before I left Heidelberg, I believe three parts of the people there had forgotten I possessed any other name. I was willing it should be so forgotten; after that terrible calamity in Liverpool, Paradyne was a tainted name, and I took no pains to recall it to any one, friend or stranger. Can you wonder at it, sir?"

"Go on," cried Dr. Brabazon, giving no direct answer to the question.

"The negotiations for my coming here were made between you and Professor Von Sark, one of our chiefs. You wrote to request him to supply you with a master who could teach French and German. He knew I was wishing to do better for myself, in the point of remuneration, than I was doing in the university, and proposed it to me. It was what I had long wanted, and I

begged him to accept it for me. Until the negotiations were concluded, I did not know that he had throughout written of me by the name of Henry, and by that only. It did not much matter, I thought; I could explain when I came."

"And why did you not?"

"Ah! there lies my sin," was the somewhat emotional answer; and the Head Master thought the young man before him was taking almost an exaggerated view of his offence. "The first evening of my arrival, there was no opportunity: many were coming and going, and you were fully occupied; but when I heard myself addressed in my own tongue as 'Mr. Henry,' when you introduced me to your daughter and to the masters as such, my face flushed with shame: it was so like premeditated deceit. I should have told you that night but for the bustle that arose in consequence of the accident to Talbot: it took all opportunity away. The next morning the bustle continued; Talbot's friends came; the doctors

came; it seemed that you had not a minute for me. In the afternoon arose that unpleasantness connected with the discovery that George Paradyne was—who he was; rendering it all the more essential for me to declare myself. But still I could not get the opportunity: the story would have been a long one; and I wished to consult you as to whether I might not still be generally known as Mr. Henry. Do you recollect, sir, my meeting you in the stone corridor just after tea, and asking if I could speak with you?"

"I think I do. I was in a hurry, I know, at the moment; for I had business at the railway station."

"Yes; you were going out, and said quickly to me, 'Another time, Mr. Henry, another time.' I went down to Mrs. Paradyne's that evening, and she—my mother—utterly forbid me to disclose it. "Did I want to ruin everybody?" she asked; "herself, me, George. Was it likely that I, Arthur Paradyne's son, should be retained at my post to *teach* the College boys, when a

question had arisen whether George might be even allowed to study with them? It was a doubt that had never before struck me; it staggered me now. My mother took a different view of it. The fact of my being a Paradyne could not make any difference to the boys, or render me less efficient as a teacher, she urged, so long as they were in ignorance of it. It was only by the knowledge that harm could come. Well; I yielded. I yielded, knowing how mistaken the reasoning was, utter sophistry; knowing how wrong a part I should be playing; but she was very urgent, and—she was my mother. There's my secret, Dr. Brabazon."

"A secret truly," observed the Head Master, leaning back in his chair, while he revolved the tale.

"The weight of it has half killed me," returned Mr. Henry, lifting his hand to his head, as if he felt a pain there. "At any moment discovery was liable to fall, bringing disgrace in its train. It was not so much *that* that I felt—or feared—as the actual

deceit in itself. My life was a long living lie, every moment of it one of acted duplicity: I, set up in a post of authority to guide and train others! When the school broke up for Christmas I begged my mother to withdraw her embargo, and let me speak then, but she would not. She would see about it when George had passed his Oxford examination, she said, not before. It is not with her full consent that I speak now; but I laid the two only alternatives before her—to declare myself, or leave the College—and she allowed, me to speak as the lesser evil. In any case I may have to leave."

"We'll see: we'll see: I think not. Why should you?" added the master, apparently putting the question to himself, or to the four walls of the room, but not to Mr. Henry. "I am glad to see young men respect the wishes of their mother."

And Mr. Henry's respect for his—that is, his sense of the law of filial obedience—was something ultra great. But he did not say it.

"What a trouble that past business of your father's must have been to you!" exclaimed the doctor, whose thoughts were roving backwards.

Trouble! Mr. Henry shrank at the word, as relating to it, even now. "It took every ray of sunshine out of my life," he breathed.

"No, no; not every one," said the master, kindly.

"For a long, long time every ray of hope —of *life* I may say—went out of me. And now my—my hope lies elsewhere; there's not much of it left for daily use."

"Where does it lie?" questioned the Head Master, rather puzzled.

The young man gave no answer, unless a sudden hectic that flushed his face, and was discernable even in the fading light could be called such. ONE, looking down at him from beyond that tranquil sky, grey now, knew where it lay, and what it was vested in.

"I had revered my father as the most honourable, just, good man living," he resumed, in a low tone; "a Christian man,

a brave officer and gentleman; and when the blow came it seemed to stun me—to take away everything that was worth living for."

He spoke only in accordance with the truth. The blow was great; his sensitiveness was exceeding great, and the shock had cut off all hope for this life. His spirit was by nature a proud spirit; his rectitude great; to do ill in the eyes of the world—and such ill!—would to him have been simply impossible; and the awful disgrace that seemed to fall upon him, to have made itself his, struck to every fibre of his inward life. Never more could he hold up his head in the sight of men. Added to this, was the terrible grief for his father, whom he so loved—for his father's fall, and his father's death. This, of itself, would have gone well nigh to break his heart.

"Have you been assisting your mother?" asked the doctor, remembering the stories carried to him of Mr. Henry's saving habits.

"Oh yes."

"Ay," said the master, as if this explained all.

Few young men have their hopes blighted on the very threshold of life as his had been. His prospects came suddenly to an end with the shock. Not a doubt of his father's guilt had penetrated his mind. The particulars, as written to him circumstantially by Mrs. Paradyne, did not admit of doubt. He had been working for them ever since. Mrs. Paradyne had a very small income of her own, not much more than enough to find her in gloves and ribbons and a new silk gown once in a way. Arthur (with what little help her daughter could give) had to do the rest. And she was not kind to him. Perhaps it was the long separation—he over in Germany, she in England—that estranged her affections from him, her eldest son. In time he wrote word to her that he had accepted an engagement in England, at Orville College, and suggested that George should be moved to it. He had two ends in view—the one the advantage of the boy;

the other that he might get some intercourse with his mother and sister. He knew how he should have to toil and pinch to meet the additional expenses, but that seemed nothing. A shadow, of what the future was to be, fell over him before he had quitted Heidelberg; for on the morning of his departure there came a letter from Mrs. Paradyne warning him *not to make himself known as George's brother or as her son*, at first, until they should have met and talked the matter over. They did meet. On the evening following that of Mr. Henry's arrival he went to her house, as perhaps may be remembered, since Mr. Raymond Trace chose, in a sense, to assist at it. During that interview he had a lesson taught him—that the future was to be estrangement, or something akin to it, between him and his family. He was to continue "Mr. Henry," never to disclose himself as a Paradyne, lest the authorities at the college should carp at it; in which case his means of assisting them at home might cease. He saw how it was—

that he was valued only in the ratio he could contribute to their support. His generous love was thrown back upon him; his impulses of tenderness were repulsed; he was to be an acquaintance rather than a son. Mrs. Paradyne was resentful at his having counselled their removal to Orville, now that it was found Trace and the Loftus boys were in the College, which, of course, was manifestly unjust. Something very like a dispute took place about the proposed concealment of name. He refused to conceal it from Dr. Brabazon; she insisted that he should. He yielded at last: she was his mother: but he went away from the house wondering whether he had not better return to Germany. Thus it had gone on. Mr. Henry—or Arthur Paradyne, if you would prefer to call him so—bearing his burden as he best might, and toiling patiently to fulfil the obligations he cheerfully accepted as his own; obligations he never thought of repining at. His heart felt crushed; his mind had a weight upon it; but he only feared lest

his health should fail and the dear ones suffer.

"Look you," interrupted Dr. Brabazon, arousing himself from a reverie; "you must remain as 'Mr. Henry' for the present. The fact that you are Arthur Paradyne does not hurt the boys; but the declaring it thus suddenly would cause a commotion that might lead to—I don't know what. Until Christmas, at any rate, things shall go on as they have done. The competition for the Orville will then be over; and really, for my part, I don't see why you should not drop the name of Paradyne, if it pleases you to do so. No, I don't," added the doctor, contesting the point with himself aloud, as if he were disputing it with an antagonist; "and I don't see what business it is of other people's, or why anybody should carp at it. So that's settled. You are Mr. Henry still. But I wish you had disclosed the truth at the beginning. It would have made no difference."

"I wish I could have done it, sir," he said, rising to take leave. "The concealment has

told upon me. Thank you ever for your kindness to me this evening, Dr. Brabazon."

"I call that young man the victim of circumstances," thought the master. "It's a good, and true, and earnest nature, I am sure; and——"

Dr. Brabazon's words came to a standstill, as he followed into the hall. There was Mr. Henry propped against the front door, instead of letting himself out of it according to the custom of everyday mortals.

"Why, what's the matter?" exclaimed the startled doctor, as the rays of the house-lamp fell on a white face of suffering.

Mr. Henry rallied himself, and apologized with a smile. He had only felt a little faint: it was over now.

A little faint! But he did not mention that sharp pain, that strange fluttering of heart, which seemed so often to follow any extra emotion or exertion; and this day had brought plenty of both for him. However, it was gone now.

"Here, don't start off in that haste," cried

the doctor, going out after him. "Don't you think you ought to have advice for that faintness?" he asked, as Mr. Henry turned.

"Yes, perhaps I ought."

"I should. You have been working your strength away. Good-night."

Mr. Henry hastened home, wrote a short letter to his sick friend Weber, enclosed the bank-note, and went out to post it. As he emerged from the short shrubbery, skirting round by the chapel, and gained the road, he saw, to his surprise, Dick Loftus."

"Why, Dick! Are you home again?"

"Got home to dinner," equably answered Dick, whose mouth was full of some crunching sweetmeat he had come down from Pond Place to buy. "We had a stunning passage: the boat pitching like mad, and Uncle Simon and old Gall fit to die. Will you have some?" he asked, exhibiting the stuff in his hand. "It's Gibraltar rock."

"Not I, Dick, thank you. I should have thought you too old to eat that."

"Am I, though?" said Dick, biting a

huge morsel of the tempting compound. "It's jolly. I say, how's Mother Butter?"

"*She's* jolly," replied Mr. Henry, laughing.

"Give my respectful compliments to her, and tell her I've come home. Do, please, Mr. Henry."

Dick disappeared with a careless good-night, that rang out joyously in the evening air. Mr. Henry, having missed the opportunity to ask about his perilous bath at Boulogne, went on to the railway station, and dropped his letter into the box. There was a popular superstition obtaining, that letters posted there went quicker than if posted at the grocer's in the village. He was taking the middle of the road back, Sir Simon's grounds on one side, the plantation on the other, — when fleet footsteps came running behind, and a pair of light hands were laid upon his coat. He turned to see his sister.

"Mary! What brings you here so late as this?"

She laughed as she explained: she was in

a merry mood. Mrs. Hill had taken them out a little way in the country, and they missed the train they ought to have come back by, and had only now got in. She could not help it, and she was running home to mamma and mamma's displeasure.

"You *will* catch it," said Mr. Henry, with comic seriousness. "Mamma had her things on in the afternoon, waiting for you to go out with her. Is that safe, Mary?"

"Yes, yes. Just for once, Arthur."

For she had linked her arm within his. Mr. Henry looked round on the lonely road. "All right," he said, "there's nobody about. I have not had you on my arm for a long while."

Was there nobody about? Indeed and there was an inquisitive pair of eyes peering after them. Mr. Raymond Trace, finding Pond Place insupportably dull on his return, had come forth by way of a diversion, to see any little thing there might be to see. And was thus rewarded. Raymond Trace was in an ill-humour with the world. Certain events

in Boulogne—the presence of George Paradyne there in the first place, and his elevation in the favour of not only Sir Simon and the Galls, but of Mr. Loftus—had been insufferably offensive to him. And this girl was George's sister!

Crossing the road with soft steps, as if he were treading upon eggs, he followed them, keeping well under the shadow of the hedge. He could see they were talking earnestly together, and he'd have given one of his ears to be able to hear. Truth to say, the evident intimacy astonished Mr. Trace not a little; he thought he had come upon a mighty secret, not creditable to the assistant master at Orville College, or to any other subordinate individual, that might indulge in such.

"The worst is over, Mary," Mr. Henry was saying. "Dr. Brabazon is at home, and I have told him."

"Oh Arthur!" she exclaimed. "But I am thankful it is done at last. What is the result?—your dismissal?"

"Quite the contrary. He was all kindness.

I am to remain on as Mr. Henry. He says he does not see why I should not adopt the name for good, and discard the other one. Will you tell mamma this?"

"Yes, I'll tell her. It will be a relief; she has been dreading the communication with a sort of nightmare. And so you will stay on?"

"If my strength shall permit me. Sometimes I have doubts of that."

A sharp pang darted through her. "Arthur, it grieves me that you should labour as you do, and yet meet with no reward. Mamma is not what she ought to be to you; I have told her so."

"Hush, child! it is the pleasure of my life to work for you all. I wish I could do more."

"I wish we were more grateful," came Miss Paradyne's impulsive answer. "George and I feel it terribly, Arthur. You should hear him break out every now and then to mamma."

He interrupted her: he never would allow

a word of reflection on his mother: and began the story of George's bravery, as related to him by Leek. They did not meet a soul: the road was always lonely at night. Miss Paradyne stopped when they drew near its end, when the lighted shops were in view in the distance.

"You must not come any farther with me, Arthur. I shall run home in no time."

She withdrew her arm, but he stood yet a minute talking, holding her hand in his. Then he bent his face on hers for a farewell kiss (not a soul was about, you know), watched her away, and turned towards his home.

Mr. Trace came out of the hedge's friendly shade, trencher first, in a glow of virtuous amazement. He had seen the signs of familiar intercourse; he had certainly seen the kiss; and his indignant feelings could only relieve themselves in a burst of unstilted words that might have been more characteristic of Dick.

"Well, this *is* a go!"

CHAPTER VII.

A VISITOR FOR SIR SIMON.

ONCE more the school had met, and were at work with a will. Ah, this was the real trial—that could occur but once in three full' years—the competition for the great Orville prize. Masters and candidates were alike on their metal, making stern preparation for it. It was no child's play. Gall, Loftus, Trace, Savage, Brown major, Whitby, Talbot, and Paradyne, were going up for it.

Who would win? Some thought one would, some another; opinions were divided, a whisper of bets reigned. Gall openly avowed he did not expect to get it, Bertie Loftus made no secret of not really trying:

they chose to go up for it as the seniors of the school, but they were regarded as virtually out of the contest. The more general impression was that the real contest would lie between Trace and Paradyne.

And none were more conscious that this was likely to prove a fact than Trace himself. He was afraid of Paradyne. In spite of Trace's large and vain self-esteem, there was a disagreeable conviction within him that in the trial Paradyne's scholarship might weigh down his own. A bitter pill of anticipation for Trace to swallow from any competitor: but from Paradyne—words could not express his angry indignation: and he felt inclined to question the divine ordering of events that should have brought that one miserable unit of creation in this offensive antagonism with him. With *him*, Raymond Trace!

Ten times a day he said to himself that it *ought not* to be. He was quite honest in thinking this: he believed he was just; for he saw things with a jaundiced eye. The

son of the man who had so signally failed in his duty to the world in general, and to his father and Mr. Loftus in particular, was out of place in Orville College, the associate of honest gentlemen. It had however pleased Dr. Brabazon to keep him in it, and Trace thought himself worthy of a gold medal at least for having buried the secret of the past from the school. The far-famed duel in Boulogne had become public property, to the raging mortification of the two duellists, who were chaffed unmercifully, and grew to wish that duels had never been invented. The rescue of Dick Loftus also spread from mouth to mouth, and Paradyne was lauded as some young god descended from Olympus. All so much heartburning for Trace. He had bitterly rebelled at the favour shown to Paradyne in Boulogne, asking what brought him there at all; what right he had there. He seemed fated to be haunted by this Paradyne everywhere: a second case of Faust and Mephistopheles. All that was bad enough, but Trace, doing violence to his

own feelings, had passed it over. What, he began to ask himself now, was—ought this fellow, this waif of ill-descent, to be allowed to go in for the great Orville prize—the prize that all were burning to gain, either for the honour or the money. Trace pondered the question very seriously, and meanwhile fanned the ill-feeling against Paradyne, which had been buried, into a smouldering heat, that might burst at any moment up in a flame.

He fanned something else—and, that was, a vague rumour reflecting on Mr. Henry. That gentleman's name became connected with Miss Paradyne's in anything but a pleasant manner: but as yet only by hints and inuendoes; the school had got hold of nothing tangible. Bertie Loftus asked Trace what the matter was, but Trace did not define it. "A bad lot, those Paradynes," he answered, drawing down the corners of his respectable lips: "and the German is in league with them." A terrible score had Trace against Mr. Henry, if only from the

fact that he continued to assist, or, as Trace phrased it, to coach Paradyne: but for that, Paradyne had never stood a chance of wresting the Orville prize from deserving fingers. And so, in this uncomfortable and uncertain state, the time went on.

One afternoon when October was passing, and the great day of decision, the first of November, was drawing near, it happened that in a very difficult Greek lesson, Trace did badly, Paradyne markedly well. They were before the Head Master, and he said a few rather sharp words to Trace, whose failure he attributed to carelessness, about allowing one younger to outstrip him. "You'll stand no chance against him, Trace, if you can't do better than this," added the doctor. Perhaps he spoke lightly, without much thought; but Trace took the words to his heart, and let them rankle there.

When tea was over, he went out alone, debating with himself whether he should disclose the past disgrace relating to Paradyne, and so stop his going up for the

Orville. Trace was of a concentrative nature, and liked this self-communing. Pacing the plantation, he thought over the question in all its bearings, and came to the conclusion that, to speak, was a duty he owed to society, and would be a righteous act in itself. This so far settled, he was about to leave the tree, against which his back had been propped for the last five minutes, and to go home, when he saw a man come stealthily forth from a dark side-path, and look out as if he were waiting for some one. Trace had no objection to a bit of private adventure, especially if it related to other people's business, and remained where he was, on the watch.

Up came Mr. Henry, making directly for the stranger's hiding-place. That he had come to meet him, was apparent; and Trace stared with all his eyes into the obscure light. He could not make out much: they passed him very close once, as they were talking together, and he heard a few words from the stranger.

"I shall stop here, I tell you. The voyage——"

Those were all the distinct words Trace caught then. When they came back again, Mr. Henry was speaking.

"Of course, if you are determined to remain, I cannot say you shall not: but I fancy you will not succeed. And then, you know, there will be the risk of——"

So far only, this time, before they were out of hearing again. Trace's ears were strained to the uttermost, but he caught only two words more, and that from the stranger as they were parting: "Mother Butter's." Mr. Henry walked quickly towards home, the man disappeared amid the trees the other way, and Trace stayed where he was, revolving the mystery. But he could find no clue to it.

Clashing footsteps sounded now. One of the boys was tearing home from the railway station. It was Lamb, with a parcel in his hand, and Trace went out to meet him. How it came about Trace never exactly

knew, but while he was saying to himself "Shall I tell, or shall I not?" he *told*, and Lamb was put in possession of the real facts relating to Paradyne: all the past trouble; the past disgrace; that he belonged to a family of fraud, and never ought to have been at Orville. Nuts for Mr. Lamb to crack. But, strange to say, no sooner had the secret escaped Trace's lips, than a voice within seemed to warn him that he had done wrong. It was too late to repent; Lamb went whispering the poison about with his stealthy tongue, and the school listened eagerly.

A few days passed on without explosion. The boys met in secret knots to take counsel, and felt half paralysed at their own audacious words. They talked of mutiny, if Paradyne were allowed to go up for the Orville; they whispered of rebellion, if subjected longer to the authority of a master so ill-doing as Mr. Henry. *But they did nothing.* Not one would undertake the responsibility of commencing hostilities, or of speaking to the Head Master: it was a practical illustration

of the old fable of the mice proposing to put the bell on the cat. And November was close at hand.

The rumours, connecting Mr. Henry's name with Miss Paradyne were by no means pleasant rumours; not tending to exalt either of them in public opinion. When a young lady could be guilty of stealing evening walks with a school usher, and very familiar walks indeed—as Mr. Lamb could testify on Trace's private authority, and *did*, turning up the whites of his eyes—of course there was no more to be said for her.

So long as these rumours were confined to the boys, they did not affect Miss Paradyne personally; but circumstances led to their being whispered beyond the college. Mrs. Hill, the lady with whom she had the daily engagement as governess, had gone unexpectedly to Torquay for the winter months, in consequence of the ill-health of one of her children, and Miss Paradyne had made another engagement with Mrs. Talbot. On the evening previous to the day she was to

enter on it, the Earl of Shrewsbury dashed home for a minute, and told his mother confidentially that she must not have Miss Paradyne for the girls; that it "wouldn't do."

"Why will it not do?" questioned Mrs. Talbot in surprise.

"Because it won't."

"James, to say so much, and no more, is nonsense. You must tell me why."

But Talbot could not say why. Things had not been made very clear to his understanding. All he knew was, that something was "up" about Miss Paradyne and Mr. Henry. He supposed they were privately engaged; but the school was in arms against Miss Paradyne, saying she went out walking with him at night, and—oh, all sorts of things. She must not be let go there as governess.

"Don't you think, James, that this is arising out of the ill-feeling entertained for Miss Paradyne's brother?" quietly asked Mrs. Talbot.

"No, I don't think it is. Oh, but there is a row about him!—going to be, at any

rate," broke off the earl in a parenthesis. "Well, I can't stop, mother mine, but don't you admit Miss Paradyne."

"Upon what plea can I refuse? I have engaged her. James—wait a moment. Upon what plea can I refuse, I ask."

James Talbot looked puzzled and rueful. "I'm sure I don't know," he answered, twirling his trencher round and round. "I thought I'd better tell you. I'm afraid they must be a bad lot. Queer things are coming out about the father: and Paradyne is not to go up for the Orville."

"Why?" she exclaimed, half-startled, and beginning to think the affair must be serious. "Not go up for the Orville!"

"The school would be in mutiny."

"James!"

"It would. And Trace may make as certain of the prize now as if he'd got it."

"Is there no chance for you, James?" she asked, rather wistfully.

He laughed, and shook his head. "I have done my best, but there's not a bit of hope

for anybody against Trace. Had Paradyne gone in for it, there'd have been a close struggle between the two — and I don't think victory would have declared for Trace. About the father? oh, I can't stay to tell you,"—preparing to dash off again. "Queer rumours they are."

Queer indeed, and various; as whispered about from boy to boy. The exaggerations were something ludicrous. "Paradyne's father had been hung for murder," "been transported for forgery," "was now serving out his time at Portland Island," and so on. Perhaps Talbot did well not to mention such to his mother.

He left her in a comfortable state of uncertainty. She did not like to disregard the warning altogether, and yet did not like to act upon it. Neither did she see how she could act upon it; and sat on much perplexed.

"I will put a question or two plainly to Miss Paradyne, when she comes to-morrow, as to whether there is any private acquaint-

ance between her and Mr. Henry," decided Mrs. Talbot at length. "I am convinced the Paradynes are as nice as they can be: and I don't believe a word against the daughter. It's all the work of those envious boys."

Utterly unconscious of the storm that was brewing, Mary Paradyne looked forward to her engagement; and when the morning and hour dawned to enter on it, she got ready with alacrity. The young are always so full of hope.

"If the remuneration were but a little better," exclaimed Mrs. Paradyne, in her semi-fretful, semi-resigned way. "Three hours a day, and luncheon and thirty-four shillings a month! What is it?"

"Dear mamma, it is better than nothing a month," was the cheering answer. "When I first knew that the Hills were going away, I feared I might be unemployed for the winter. Something better may arise later: and I am sure I shall like Mrs. Talbot. Miss Brabazon dropped a hint to me the other

day that perhaps they might engage me for Rose."

She tied her bonnet, kissed her mother, and went forth with her bright face. It was not far to go; only a few doors. Mrs. Talbot came to her directly, and entered on her task, which did not seem an agreeable one—that of putting a few questions in regard to her intimacy with Mr. Henry. But, instead of meeting them—as Mrs. Talbot had anticipated she would—in a calm spirit of refutation, the young lady turned red, grew confused, and flung her hands up to her disturbed face with a faint cry of dismay. It had come upon her so suddenly.

"Believe me, I do not wish to pain you," said Mrs. Talbot, speaking gently in the midst of her surprise. "Neither would I think of inquiring into any particulars that you may prefer not to disclose. Only tell me that there is nothing in the rumour; that you and Mr. Henry have no—no—acquaintance in common; that will be quite sufficient."

"But I cannot tell it you," replied Miss Paradyne in her straightforward truth.

"What the college boys have got hold of, I'm sure I am unable to say," resumed Mrs. Talbot, thinking she could not have been understood. "Nothing very grave: the most tangible charge I can make out is, that you have been seen walking with Mr. Henry. There is, of course, no harm in that; the harm lies in its being done in secret. Can you refute it, Miss Paradyne?"

No, she could not: and she was growing sick with fear. Not fear for herself: the reproach that might ordinarily be supposed to arise from such a thing, she never so much as glanced at. Her whole thought was for her brother Arthur, lest the concealment of which he had been guilty in regard to his true name, was becoming known. Mrs. Talbot, feeling both grieved and surprised, pressed the question.

"I daresay I may have been seen with Mr. Henry: I did not know it," answered Miss Paradyne, forced into the avowal, and

beginning to shiver. Had it only occurred to her to say "My mother is cognisant of all I do," Mrs. Talbot might have been satisfied: but it did not.

There was nothing for it but to part. Mrs. Talbot reluctantly said she could not carry out the engagement, and Mary Paradyne went away, to bear home her unhappy tale. As she stood at Mrs. Talbot's door, the bright sun shining full upon her, she became aware how long the interview had lasted, for the outdoor boys were quitting the college after morning school. George was nearly the first of them, and she drew him into the middle of the road.

"Whatever is the matter?" cried he, perceiving something strange in her countenance.

"George," she whispered, "you must go to Arthur——"

"To Mr. Henry," interrupted George, correcting her. "You are not half so prudent as I am, Mary. I've told you of this before."

"To Mr. Henry," she mechanically resumed, her heart beating with a great pain. "Tell him to be on his guard, lest he should be taken unawares. Something is oozing out, I am sure; and Mrs. Talbot has declined to receive me."

"Declined to receive you!" repeated George, his honest grey eyes flashing anger.

"She was very kind in the midst of it, but she said there were rumours abroad connected with Mr. Henry, and if I could not refute them, I must not enter on the engagement. I did not quite understand her," added Mary Paradyne, speaking to herself rather than to George: "but you had better go at once and warn Ar—— warn—you know."

George laughed at the slip, pushed his trencher jauntily aside, and turned back whistling. Knots of the outdoor boys were advancing. Some shot past him with a bound; some stole by sheepishly, as if ashamed to cut him; others walked on deliberately and looked straightforward; a few

gave him a hard, bold, insolent stare of non-recognition; and as he went by the quadrangle, the juniors, gathered there, turned their backs upon him.

"It's an awful shame that they should send me to Coventry like this," soliloquized George. "If I thought any one of them set the rest on, wouldn't I leather him! Never mind, gentlemen, if I do get the Orville, you'll be more civil to me."

He was dashing into Mr. Henry's room, when Mrs. Butter interposed, rather less crusty than usual. Mr. Henry was engaged at the moment; he must call again.

"I'll wait in your kitchen, Mother Butter," said George, who rarely stood on ceremony.

"Then you can't," answered Mother Butter, with more haste and decision than the case seemed to warrant. "I've got my saucepans on the fire, and you'd be upsetting of 'em. There. Be off."

As if to end the colloquy, Mr. Henry's

parlour door opened, and Miss Brabazon came forth.

"Rely upon me," Mr. Henry said to her in a low tone: and George wondered.

They went into the parlour together, the two brothers, and George delivered his sister's message, adding a comment of his own. "I'd give a guinea to know what's up."

Mr. Henry pondered over it for a few minutes in silence, leaning his head upon his hand. His face was turned to the searching light of the meridian sun, and something unusually wan in its aspect struck George.

"The better plan will be to declare all; to put away this semi-concealment altogether," observed Mr. Henry. "Mary must not be subjected to unpleasantness."

"Only let me get the Orville," observed George, with a vain schoolboy's light boasting. "I'll crow over some of them then."

"George!"

"I know; you are all for meekness and peace. I *should* like to pay off some of those

fellows. Will you believe that I met half the classes coming here, and not a soul of the whole lot spoke to me? Something new is arising. I've seen it this week past."

"I have seen it, too," was Mr. Henry's reply. "George, I used to say you would live this down by dint of time and patience; I thought just after you got back from France that the time had nearly come. But I have my doubts now. I wish I could have helped you better. Well, I'll think about this matter, George, and decide on something. You go home to your dinner now."

Nothing loth to obey, for dinner was as welcome to him as it is to most schoolboys, George was quitting the room, when Mrs. Butter entered it, with a small tray, a basin of bread and milk on its white cloth. She put it before Mr. Henry and went out again.

"I say," cried George, "that's not your dinner, is it? Why it's nothing but bread and milk!"

"My appetite is going strangely," observed

Mr. Henry. "Slops seem to suit me best now."

George's great grey eyes flashed out a look of yearning. "Arthur! you have been starving yourself for us—that we may have plenty!"

"Don't be indiscreet; there's no Arthur here," returned Mr. Henry, with a light smile. "I am eating bread and milk to-day, George, because I feel ill: that's all. Run home."

Easily reassured—as it was in his age and nature to be—George Paradyne went flying off. In turning the angle by the chapel at a sharp canter, he came full tilt against Sir Simon Orville, who was walking towards his home.

"Holloa, young sir! Don't run me down. I am not a ship."

George laughed, begged his pardon, and was passing on, when Sir Simon stopped him.

"Here, George; don't fly off again as if you were wound up to go on wheels. What

is this matter about your not going up for the Orville."

"I don't understand you, Sir Simon."

"Are you going up for it?"

"Of course I am, sir. I should like to get it, too. And I don't say I shan't," he concluded, laughing.

"Why, what did those young simpletons mean, then?" cried the knight. "I met a lot of them just now, and Dick Loftus whispered to me you were not going up for the Orville."

"It is a mistake," said George. "Not that I should go up if the fellows could prevent me. But they can't, you know, sir. Goodbye, Sir Simon."

Sir Simon went on, the matter passing from his mind. Turning into his own grounds, he had been busying himself for some time amidst his cherished autumn flowers, when a servant came out, having apparently just seen him from the house.

"A gentleman is waiting to see you, Sir Simon."

"Bless me," cried Sir Simon, who was too kind-hearted, too simple-minded ever to keep people waiting unnecessarily, gentle or simple. "Who is it, Thomas?"

"I don't know, sir. He came in a cab with a portmanteau. He looks like a traveller."

Sir Simon went trotting off as fast as his short legs would go. The servant went after him.

"It is not Mr. Loftus, Thomas, I suppose? You'd know him."

"Oh dear no, sir, it's not Mr. Loftus. It is somebody older than Mr. Loftus."

Thomas went forward and held open the door for his master to enter. In the tesselated hall, with its bright painted windows gleaming in the sunlight and throwing out their rich colours, Sir Simon saw a portmanteau and a cloak. He turned to the door on the right, and entered. The traveller sat in the shade of the spacious room, the green blinds being closely drawn behind him, and for a moment Sir Simon did

not recognise him. The stranger: a slight elderly man, wearing silver-rimmed spectacles: rose quietly and offered his hand.

"Don't you know me, Simon?"

"Why—my goodness me! It's Robert Trace!"

CHAPTER VIII.

AS IF ILL-LUCK FOLLOWED HIM!

THEY sat alone, knees together, talking of the present and the past. Sir Simon had never been very fond of his brother-in-law; but to see him alive, after so long a period of no news, was a great relief; and he gave him a cordial welcome. Mr. Trace spoke of his unfortunate losses in the United States, but did not go into details; at least, into details that Sir Simon could make much of. The great scheme, about which he had been so sanguine, had failed, miserably failed, almost before it was organized: and the thousand pounds, so generously sent out to him by Sir Simon, had been swallowed in

the vortex, together with his own funds. After that, he had gone to New York, trying, trying ever since, to redeem his position. He could not do it, and had now come home to Europe, penniless.

"I thought that Boston affair was a good one, or I should not have sent the money out," observed Sir Simon. "How came it to fail?"

"Mismanagement partly; partly ill-luck," was the answer of Mr. Trace, curtly delivered.

"Not your mismanagement, surely?" cried Sir Simon, who had the highest opinion of his brother-in-law as a business man.

"Mismanagement altogether. It was a great deal that Hopper's fault. I was a fool ever to have made him secretary to the affair, or to give him power," added Mr. Trace, with unmistakable animus. "Set a beggar on horseback and we know where he'll ride."

"What Hopper?" asked Sir Simon, struck with the name.

"What Hopper!" was the tart retort, as if Sir Simon's question were superfluous—as indeed the hearer thought it. Mr. Trace had never been a good-tempered man.

"Surely you don't mean the young man who was clerk to you in Liverpool!" cried Sir Simon. "What took him to America?"

Robert Trace raised his eyes from their moody stare on the ground and glanced at his brother-in-law. "You knew Hopper was at Boston with me!"

"Not I. How should I know it? I have never heard of the young man from the time of the break-up at Liverpool."

A minute's perplexed gaze, and then Robert Trace dropped his eyes again. He had made a false move. But that he had supposed Sir Simon knew of his ex-clerk's presence in America, he had certainly not mentioned him.

"Hopper told me, more than once, that he wrote to you from Boston, Simon."

"He never did—to my knowledge. What took him out there?"

"I don't know"—and Mr. Trace's tone changed to quiet civility, the same tone that used to strike on Sir Simon's ear with a false ring. "He walked into the office one morning in Boston, to my great surprise, and asked me if I could help him to employment. It happened that I had been wishing for a clever secretary, or sub-manager, under myself, an Englishman if I could get him; and I put Hopper in the place. He was sharp, intelligent, up to the work, and had served us well in Liverpool."

"And by way of rewarding you, he made ducks and drakes of your money and mine!"

"He turned out as great a rogue as ever stepped," exclaimed Mr. Trace, an acrimonious red tinging his cheeks. "I was obliged to go away from Boston to avoid him. The man nearly worried my life out. He made out a claim, and wanted to enforce it. When he discovered that I had gone to New York, he followed me there. I had a world of trouble with him."

"A claim for what?" asked Sir Simon. But Mr. Trace did not answer at once.

"Past salary," he presently said, rousing himself out of a reverie. "I had a great deal of trouble with him. The fellow stuck to me like a leech. He claimed a hundred pounds. I would have given it to him willingly, if I'd had it, to be rid of him. Three several times did he tell me he had written over to you."

"But why should he write to me?"

"I conclude for assistance," replied Mr. Trace after another pause. "I know he said he did write, and it never occurred to me to doubt him. He knew of the money you had kindly sent me in answer to my appeal, and possibly thought he might make one on his own score. He was a great rogue."

" nk it possible that he was," returned Sir Simon; somewhat significantly to Mr. Trace's ear, who had applied the epithet in more of a general sense than a particular one. "Did it ever occur to you, Robert, to suspect that Hopper might have been the

guilty man at Liverpool? Hopper, and not Paradyne."

"No," cried Mr. Trace in an accent of surprise not mistakable.

"That sharp young son of Paradyne's thought it at the time," observed Sir Simon, who was speaking in accordance with what had been related to him by Mr. Loftus in Boulogne, touching the conversation with George Paradyne. "*I* don't cast suspicion on the man, mind. I have no cause to do so."

"Nor has anybody else," quietly returned Mr. Trace, taking off his spectacles to wipe them. "A clerk could not have played the game for an hour; I should have found it out at once. Not but that Hopper was villain enough for it."

"Where is he now?"

"Dead."

"Dead!"

Mr. Trace nodded, and broke into a quiet laugh. It jarred on the ear of Sir Simon, and his brow contracted.

"Don't deem me unfeeling, Simon. I am not laughing at Hopper's death: which was sad enough: but at a mistake he made. Never mind that now."

"I do mind. I want to hear all this."

"I had taken a berth on board the 'Cultivator,' a New York vessel, bound for London. Hopper discovered this, and took one also, with the view no doubt of renewing his worry on the passage. I did not sail in her. He did; and was drowned."

"Mercy upon us!" cried Sir Simon.

"You heard of the calamity, I daresay," continued Mr. Trace, putting on his glasses again. "She went down with every soul on board. We got news of her loss at New York just before I left. Laugh at that? No. It may be my own fate in going back."

"Shall you return to the New Country?"

"If I can get you to help me once again," boldly answered Mr. Trace. "I came home for the sole purpose of asking you. I shall do better if I get another start. I ought to have done well before, but——"

"But what?" asked Sir Simon, interrupting the sudden pause.

"But for ill-luck. Over and over again the chances slipped through my fingers. It was as if ill-luck followed me. We'll talk further of this another day, Simon."

Sir Simon nodded acquiescence, and rang the bell for Mr. Trace to be shown to a chamber.

A message was despatched to the college for Raymond, and he arrived in the evening. His astonishment when he saw his father was something ludicrous, so entirely was he unprepared for it, and the pleasure proportionately great. Cold and cynical to the general world, Raymond cared for his father. Raymond poured out his budget of news of the past and present; it was of various kinds and degrees of interest: and Mr. Trace the elder had his ears regaled with the current history of the Paradyne family, and George's presumptuous aspirings to the Orville prize.

"But we shall do him," cried Trace, with a self-satisfied nod. "Where's Uncle Simon?"

Sir Simon's absence had passed unnoticed in their own absorption of self-interest. Mr. Trace could not say where he was.

Truth to say, there was a something beating on that estimable knight's brain: a little scrap of news that he had read, or seemed to have read, in the newspapers some days before. He thought it related to the ship spoken of by Mr. Trace, "The Cultivator:" and he was now hunting in every corner of the house for old newspapers, which he scanned attentively. But without success. He went back to the room, nodded to Raymond, and sat down in silence, drumming on the table and ransacking his treacherous memory. It was so unusual a mood for Sir Simon, that Raymond remarked upon it, asking if anything was amiss.

"I am trying to recollect something," was the reply. "Your father has told you, I suppose, Raymond, of Hopper's sailing for home in the ship 'Cultivator,' and her sinking with her passengers——"

"No. I have not told him," interrupted

Mr. Trace, so sharply as to startle Sir Simon. "Why bring it up to him?" he more calmly added, appearing to recollect himself. "The ship was lost with every soul on board."

"But that's just it—that I don't think every soul was lost," explained Sir Simon. "I read an account lately of the landing of some passengers at Cork, who were supposed to have been lost. They were picked up at sea in an open boat, having put off from a foundering vessel. It strikes me the vessel was 'The Cultivator.'"

"If you are speaking of 'The Cultivator,' from New York, some of her passengers have been saved, and are now in England," interposed Raymond. "Mr. Batty, old Gall's partner, had a son on board; the news arrived of the ship's loss, and the Battys went into mourning; but, a day or two ago, young Batty walked in. Father, what's the matter?"

Mr. Trace was standing up, looking like a man scared out of his senses. "Is—Hopper —saved?" he gasped, rather than asked.

"I don't know," answered Raymond. "Who is Hopper?"

"And if he is?—you need not be afraid of him over here!" cried Sir Simon, wondering at the emotion displayed. "It is your father's former clerk at Liverpool that we are speaking of, Raymond," he added to the son. "The man went over to Boston, got put into a good thing there by your father, which failed; and then he began to worry him for money. Let him come and worry here! We'll teach him that England is not without laws, if America is."

Raymond, all curiosity, questioned further, and Mr. Trace could not put a stop to Sir Simon's answers; though it seemed that he would have done it, had there been a decent plea. There was not time for much; Raymond was unable to stay: but for the peremptory message, he would not have come out at all that busy evening. Mr. Trace put his hat on to walk part of the way with his son. They struck into the plantation, arm in arm: it was the shortest

way; and the moon glimmered cheerily through the trees.

"You are as tall as I am, Raymond," observed Mr. Trace.

"And that's not very tall; I hope to shoot up yet," answered Raymond. "You should see Bertie Loftus. But it seems to me that you have grown shorter."

"As we all do, when age and care come upon us," remarked Mr. Trace. And, with that, he relapsed into silence.

"I hope you have come back rich, sir," resumed Raymond presently, in a tone of half jest, half earnest.

"I have come back not worth a shilling, Raymond," said Mr. Trace, momentarily halting as if to give emphasis to his words. "All I had of my own, all I borrowed from your uncle, is lost."

Something like an ice-shaft shot through Raymond in his bitter disappointment. During this many, many months' silence of his father's, fond visions had dawned over him of his coming back a millionaire.

"How is it lost?" he asked, when the shock allowed him to speak.

"Oh! in those American securities, and in unlucky speculations. I was not clever enough for the Yankees, you see."

"What was my uncle saying about Hopper? I did not understand him."

"He says that Hopper's saved; whereas I had thought he was drowned."

"I meant, sir, about his worrying you. But he did not say Hopper was saved; only that he might be."

"Raymond, as surely as that I see those trees around us, so surely do I see that the man's saved."

"And what if he is?"

"Why, he has it in his power to do me injury."

"Of what nature, sir?"

Mr. Trace looked upwards, as if searching for an answer. It was a remarkably bright night, and the moonbeams sent a radiance on the glass of the spectacles. "He says I owe him money, Raymond; he might pursue

me for it, I suppose, in this country, and give me a world of trouble. Do you recollect him?"

"Pretty well. I have a sort of general recollection of him."

"Raymond, do you look out for him;" and Mr. Trace pressed his son's arm, to give emphasis to the charge. "A middle-sized man of two-and-thirty, or thereabouts, with a pale face, and a reddish shade on his brown hair. He was looking shabby when I last saw him, perhaps is more so now. If he *is* saved, the first thing he'd do would be to come here and watch for me by stealth. Keep your eyes open, and warn me."

"But, sir, do you really owe him money?"

"No; I do not," was the positive answer. "I don't legally owe him a farthing. Nevertheless, I should" — Mr. Trace paused— "I should have some difficulty in proving that here. Were he to press his false claim upon me to the extent of arrest, which is just what he'd like to do, I might languish in prison longer than I care to think of."

"I will look out," murmured Trace. "I think I should know him. I wish we were not so busy with the Orville. But in a couple of days that will be over."

"Shall you get that prize?"

"If Paradyne is put out of it. You heard me say so, father?"

"Yes, yes," was Mr. Trace's laconic answer, as if the very mention of the name were offensive to him.

A silence ensued. Raymond's spirits were down at zero; his father's were not much higher. As they passed the spot where Mr. Henry came out to meet the stranger, the fact was naturally recalled to Trace's mind: he had not yet succeeded in fathoming the mystery. All in a moment a question darted through him—could that man have been Hopper? That man was shabby, that man was pale; that man had a reddish cast in his hair, and looked about two or three and thirty; and Trace had heard him speak of a voyage. A conviction that it was Hopper, and no other, took instant possession of him.

With his brain beating at the discovery, his heart shrinking with an apprehensive fear, Trace halted in his walk, and rapidly told the news.

"When was this, do you say?" questioned Mr. Trace in a covert whisper, as if afraid the very trees might hear.

"It was last Friday. Five days ago."

"Had the saved passengers been landed then?"

"Oh dear yes, and had come from Cork to England. Young Batty had."

"Then, Raymond, it was Hopper," said Mr. Trace, who was looking at matters through his own suspicious glasses; and his face seemed to turn of a grey hue. "Rely upon it, he was trying to ferret out whether I was in the neighbourhood. Who is this Mr. Henry?"

"Our German and French master. He's an awful rat. Just the fellow for a sneak to apply to for any dirty information."

"You must try and get the truth out of him—whether it was Hopper or not, and if

so, where he is now. I'll wait for you here."

"What—now?" exclaimed Trace. "I—I don't suppose he'll tell me. I am not friendly with him."

"Make yourself friendly for the nonce, and worm it out of him," said Mr. Trace imperatively. "Raymond, *I must be at some certainty.* This is almost a matter of life or death."

Raymond went forward without another word; and with a curious sinking of the heart to which he was totally unaccustomed, and did not know what to make of. This sort of coming home of his father's was so very different from those past lofty visions of his. As to the possible arrest, hinted at, Trace went hot when he thought of it. *His* father consigned to an ignominious debtors' prison in the face and eyes of the college where he had played first-fiddle? Why, in appearance it would be half as bad as the back disgrace of that miserable Paradyne!

Conning his lesson as he went along—a

civil request to Mr. Henry to satisfy him upon some German terminations that hopelessly puzzled him—Trace at length found himself in Mrs. Butter's garden, and closely contiguous to a young damsel who was dancing in the moonlight. Trace raised his cap: child though she was, the school treated her with due respect as their Head Master's daughter.

"Miss Rose! What are you doing here?"

"I am dancing to keep myself warm."

"But why are you here at all?"

"I came after Emma," she whispered confidentially, with a suppressed laugh. "She is always going to Mother Butter's after tea now, and she'll never let me go with her; it's cold she says; so I just ran after her to-night. I think there's somebody staying here that Emma comes to see," continued the incautious girl in a lower whisper: "some friend of Mr. Henry's that dare not go out in the day-time."

"Some friend of Mr. Henry's that dare

not go out in the day-time!" echoed Trace, repeating the words mechanically, his whole thoughts full of the man who *might* be there, and *might* be Hopper. "Why do you think so, Miss Rose?"

"Never you mind," returned the young lady, with scant ceremony. "I overheard Emma say something to Mr. Henry the other day; but it's nothing to you."

At that moment the house door opened, and Miss Brabazon appeared at it, attended by Mother Butter with a candle in her hand. "You will tell Mr. Henry, then, when he comes in," Miss Brabazon was saying to the woman, the words reaching Trace's ear distinctly, as he stepped aside out of view.

"I will, Miss Emma. He'll be in directly now, and I'll tell him as soon as he comes."

Miss Brabazon walked away quickly; Rose allowed her to go some distance, and then ran after her with a shout. A few words of surprised reprimand echoed on the night air, and they went on together. Trace followed quietly: it was just possible he

might catch a stray word, touching the "friend" of Mr. Henry's: and he knew now the latter was not in. In the dwarf shrubbery that wound round near the chapel, between the cricket field and the gymnasium ground, they met Mr. Henry. Trace stepped outside it, behind the bushy laurel trees, and there, rather to his surprise, found himself close to his father, who happened to have strolled to the spot as he waited for his son. Mr. Henry raised his hat as he spoke to Miss Brabazon, and the bright moon lit up his features with perfect distinctness to the view of the gentlemen watchers.

"I have left a message for you with Mrs. Butter," said Miss Brabazon. "You will be kind enough to attend to it for me."

"I will," answered Mr. Henry. "Is that you, Miss Rose?"

"She ran after me, naughty child! I am taking her home for punishment," returned Miss Brabazon, in a tone between jest and anger. "Good-night."

They parted. Raymond Trace was hasten-

ing after Mr. Henry, when he found his arm detained by his father in a firm grasp. "Let me go," whispered Raymond. "That's Mr. Henry. I can fall into conversation with him more naturally as we walk along, than if I made a formal call at his rooms."

"Who do you say it is?" breathed Mr. Trace.

"The German master, Mr. Henry."

"You are mistaken, Raymond; the moonlight is deceiving you. It is some years since I saw that young man's face, but I should recollect it amidst a thousand."

Trace stared. "My dear father, I assure you it *is* Mr. Henry. I ought to know him; I take my lessons from him daily."

"Do you! It is Arthur Paradyne."

"Who?" almost shouted Trace.

"Arthur Paradyne; the eldest son. In the summer preceding the crash at Liverpool, business called me to Heidelberg. I took a letter of introduction to young Paradyne from his father; he was then a junior master

in the university, and I saw him often. He used to act as my interpreter."

"Then he has been amidst us under a false name!" exclaimed Trace, with considerable animus.

The father gave a slight laugh. "He has found it convenient to be so, no doubt. You must still ask him about this man."

Trace darted off. He thought he had got a great hold upon Mr. Henry in this strange secret, and scarcely could persuade himself to make any show of courtesy while he entered on the question of the "German terminations."

"I could show you with the book in two minutes what it might take me five to explain without it," said Mr. Henry, with his usual ready kindness. "Perhaps you will come in-doors with me."

"Have you any visitor?" asked Trace, rather abruptly.

"Visitor?—no. I am quite alone."

"I—fancied—there—was a visitor at Mother Butter's," returned Trace in a

hesitating manner, not being sure of his best policy, whether to speak of the visitor openly, whether not. "A friend of yours, somebody said."

"Who said it?"

"Really I cannot charge my memory with that. I saw you meet some—gentleman—in the plantation a few days ago: I thought it might be he."

"What a fine night it is!" observed Mr. Henry, courteously ignoring the suggestion, and letting his pupil see that he intended to ignore it. "It is clear and cold enough for a frost."

"Mr. Henry, would you mind telling me the name of the person you met?" resumed Trace, perceiving that if he wanted information he must ask distinctly for it.

"I cannot tell it you. I cannot tell you anything about him," was the reply. "We will quit the subject, if you please, Trace; it is neither yours nor mine."

"Where is he now? Will you tell me that? Is he in this neighbourhood?"

"Let the subject drop, Trace;" reiterated Mr. Henry, with quiet authority. "I say that it is no concern of yours or of mine."

Trace felt himself checkmated; he feared he had not gone to work in a sufficiently crafty manner, which vexed him. "It may be better that you should satisfy me on this trifle," he resumed, rather scornfully. "You are in my power."

"In what manner?" quietly asked Mr. Henry.

"I know your secret. I could go to the Head Master this moment and say, 'We have a wolf in sheep's clothing amongst us; a man with a false name.' If he has glossed over other things, do you think he would gloss over that?"

"You can try him."

The equanimity of the voice was so entire, the manner so unruffled, that Trace began to feel doubtful of his grounds. "Can you deny what I say?" he asked. "I accuse you of being—not Mr. Henry, but Arthur Paradyne."

"I am Arthur Henry Paradyne: as the Head Master knows. Though I wonder how you came to find it out, Trace. In what way does the fact affect you?"

"The *contact* has affected us," foamed Trace, giving way to temper for once in his life, for the cool tone nearly drove him wild. "Is it fitting that you, the son of—of—you know who and what—should be placed over us? I wonder you could dare to stay, knowing you were a Paradyne."

"Knowing I was a Paradyne and that you were a Trace, it has made me all the more solicitous to do my duty by you," came the low answer of emotion. "Oh, Trace! have you never marvelled *why* I was so uniformly lenient to you, so anxious for your advancement, so solicitous to hide your faults; always striving to do you good, to get you on, to make your life at college easy? That bitter debt my father left, the wrong on you and yours, has been ever on my mind: I have been trying to work a tithe of it off, because I am his son, Arthur Paradyne."

Trace was not in the least softened; his strong prejudices did not allow him to be so. That this long-disliked master should turn out to be Arthur Paradyne, seemed like a personal and positive insult to himself. But he thought he might turn the discovery to present account.

"You can work a portion of the debt off this instant, if you will, by disclosing to me the name of the man you met."

"That I cannot do. Ask me anything else, Trace."

"Say you will not."

"The terms are almost synonymous. I *may* not."

"That's enough," retorted Trace, turning on his heel. "Good evening to you, Mr. Arthur Paradyne."

CHAPTER IX.

THE OUTBREAK.

IT was the morning following the arrival of Mr. Trace. The boys filed out of chapel: but instead of hindering, lingering, dallying, as it was generally their pleasure to do, those of the first desk threw off their gowns with remarkable haste, and rushed into school. As sheep follow their leader, so do boys mostly go in the wake of their fellows; and George Paradyne, who appeared to be the only one of the class not acting in concert, and who had rather wondered wherefore the bustle, hastened in also. But he found no place for him. His seat was occupied. By dint of sitting wide instead of

close, the first desk contrived to fill the whole space. Brown major was before Paradyne's particular compartment, had got it open, and was disposing his own books and belongings in it.

"What are you doing with my desk, Brown major?" demanded George. "Move down lower, will you."

Paradyne's place now was next to Trace. It had been curious to note in the past weeks the tacit antagonism of the two boys, sitting side by side; Trace ignoring Paradyne always, Paradyne having no resource but to be ignored. Brown major took no heed to the request, and did not move down.

"Will you go down, I say, Brown? I shall have to pull you out if you don't."

Not a word of answer. The boys had their books out now, and were bending over them, putting up their backs as if some great draught were behind. George Paradyne laid hold of Brown to swing him out, when Loftus major interposed. Gall was at home with a temporary indisposition, or it might not have

occurred, since the senior was expected to keep peace. Bertie Loftus acted in a degree for him, but assumed little authority.

"Take your hands off him, Paradyne; we cannot have a disturbance here."

"He is in my place; he is taking my desk," cried George.

"Look here," drawled Bertie; "as good be open about the matter. The class tell me they don't intend to let you occupy your place again: and if the Head Master insists that you should, there'll be a rebellion. But it's thought he won't insist in the face of things. I am not speaking for myself," he continued, idly running his fingers through his luxuriant curls with a cool indifference that might have been laughable but that it was so real, and so characteristic of him. "Being, as may be said, a remotely interested party, I hold myself neuter: I have neither counselled this, nor do I join in it. But I can't have a disturbance, you know. Brown, pass me that Homer."

"Just disclose the meaning of this, will

you?" cried George, speaking to the class collectively, "before I pull Brown major out of my place."

"Tell him, some of you," drawled Bertie.

For a moment there was silence: nobody seemed inclined to respond. Paradyne lifted his arm to begin aggression, when Brown major turned round; speaking however civilly.

"There'd better be no row over this, Paradyne. If you flung me out of the place —which perhaps might turn out to be a bit of mistaken boasting, if we came to try it— another would fill it up. You ought never to have come among us, and that's a fact; there has been a feeling against you always, but it's only since a day or two that we've known the cause. If I were you, I'd go quietly out at that door and through the college gates, and have done with it for good. And upon my word and honour I say this for the best: it's the only thing left for you to do."

"If you don't tell me the meaning of this,

I'll fling you out, I say," repeated George. "I give you three seconds. One! two!——"

"The meaning is, that you can't be tolerated here any longer," interrupted Brown. "Neither may you go in for the Orville."

"That's not the *meaning*—that's the result. I ask you for the meaning—the reason—the cause. Are you stupid?" added George, stamping his foot.

"Well—you know what your father was."

"What was he?"

Brown major hesitated. He was of a civil nature, and really did not like his task. To say to a college friend in his teens your father was a swindler—or a forger—or a felon—is not pleasant. There was no time to lose, for the under-masters were coming in.

"I don't know the rights of it as well as some of them, Paradyne," said Brown at length. "Of course I'm sorry for *you;* but we are gentlemen here. Ask Trace the particulars—or ask Lamb."

Before another word could be spoken, the hall had to rise at the entrance of the Head

Master. Instead of taking his seat when he reached his table, he remained standing, and addressed the first desk.

"Gentlemen, in consequence of the absence of Mr. Henry this morning, the order of studies has been changed. You will go at once to Mr. Baker's room for mathematics."

There was a moment's lingering; either in surprise at the command, for it was completely out of routine, or for some other purpose. Could it be that the boys were deliberating, each in his heart, whether *then* to declare their feud against Paradyne? If so, nothing came of it. Bertie Loftus led the way through the room, and the rest followed him, including Paradyne.

Mr. Baker was waiting for them. Mr. Baker was an irascible sort of gentleman who might have settled any dispute, any incipient rebellion, by caning around him indiscriminately. The room was large too, the table spacious, the diagrams on the walls were plentiful, and there was no chance of shutting out George Paradyne from a seat

here. So the class had to bottle up its resentment for the present.

Trace had not outwardly joined in the movement by word or look. Not in obedience to the advice given by his father the previous evening, but in accordance with his usual policy. Mr. Trace had casually remarked, "I'd not interfere with young Paradyne, Raymond, to oppress him. What passed was no fault of his, you know." Advice which Mr. Raymond had not the slighest intention of following. Some inward speculation was arising in his mind, touching the cause of Mr. Henry's absence, as just announced. Had he been dismissed? Had the boast—that the Head Master knew who he really was—been a false one, and had Mr. Henry, in consequence of the discovery, forced himself to declare his deceit, and been met by an abrupt dismissal? Trace would have given his two ears—as they say in France—for the knowledge, but did not see his way clear to get at it. As if to gratify him, Mr. Baker suddenly inquired

of the class generally, if they knew why Mr. Henry was absent. George Paradyne, who was standing before one of the slates, following out its diagrams, turned round to answer.

"Mr. Henry is gone out, sir. I went round this morning to borrow Ollendorf's key from him, and found him away. Mother Butter thought he had gone off somewhere by train."

"I feared he might be ill," remarked Mr. Baker. "He has looked ill lately."

> "His wicked conscience smited him,
> He lost his stomach daily,"

sang Whitby in an undertone, quoting the lines from a once popular song that Mr. Lamb carolled on occasion for private benefit at bedroom festivals, and protested it had been composed by Tennyson.

"Mr. Henry had another of those fainting-fits last night when I was reading with him," said George, in answer. "Mother Butter came in, and asked him what he meant by not getting advice for himself."

"Attend to your business," roared out Mr. Baker by way of acknowledging the information. And they did it, one and all; bottling up their private grievances, as previously remarked, for a more auspicious opportunity. Which did not arrive until the close of morning school, so cross-grained and inconvenient a turn did the order of studies take that morning.

Mr. Henry had taken the train to London, to pay a visit to a great physician. Not in obedience to Mrs. Butter's remonstrance, as disclosed to us by George, but because the time for doing so was come. He had been intending to see a doctor, long and long; had put it off in a sort of vague dread, as many of us do; and now it could no longer be delayed; no, not for a day. As George said, he had another fainting-fit the previous night; but, instead of recovering from it blithely, as was usual, he had lain all night in pain, his heart fluttering strangely. Medical aid, and that of the best, was necessary now, although he felt well again in the morning.

The dread was not for himself, but for those dependent on him. Who would help them if his help failed? The whole night long he lay awake, tormenting himself. With morning light—daylight does not come early when November is on the dawn—he rose and took his breakfast. Dropping a note to the Head Master, explaining the cause of his absence, he went off by train to London, doing all in a quiet manner. Times and again it had been in his thoughts to go to this gentleman, who was one of fame, especially in diseases of the heart. Very nearly an hour did he wait in the anteroom, before his turn came.

He was examined, questioned, talked to: and then the doctor sat down to his table and took up a pen. But he laid it down again.

"I am about to write you a prescription; but I tell you candidly it is not medicine you want. One thing may do you good; and one thing only."

"What is that?"

"Rest. Rest both of mind and body. I

do not mean tranquillity only, but entire rest from all kinds of exertion. Great or sudden exertion might be——" the doctor paused; and, as it struck Mr. Henry, seemed to change the word he had been about to speak—"prejudical to you, excessively so. You must avoid alike fatigue and emotion."

"I gather, then, that my heart is not sound."

"Not quite as sound as could be wished."

"Is it so unsound as to place me in danger?" questioned Mr. Henry, his luminous eyes bent earnestly on the physician. "You need not fear to speak freely to me. I have come here to ask you to do so."

"In a case such as yours there is no doubt danger," replied the doctor. "We can do little. It lies chiefly with the patient himself."

"What does?"

"Well, I had almost said life or death. So long as he can keep himself perfectly tranquil, the danger is comparatively very little."

"But it is always there, nevertheless, even with tranquillity. Am I to understand that?"

"It is. In a degree."

"I had a friend once; a fellow-student at Heidelburg, who had heart-disease. The German doctors recommended perfect tranquillity—as you do to me. He followed their advice; he was of wealthy family, and could do it; but the disease made rapid strides, and shortly killed him. He lay ill less than a week."

"Ah, yes," replied the doctor, evincing no surprise.

Mr. Henry, who displayed and felt entire calm throughout the interview, then proceeded to mention the strides his own sickness had been making. He was quite aware of the nature of his (possibly) inherited malady; recent symptoms had brought the knowledge to him. But, had he been differently circumstanced, in the enjoyment of past immunity from work and care and fear, it might not have shown itself for years and years. As it was—he frankly

spoke of what the ending must in all probability soon be. The physician did not say much; it is not customary to do so: but when Mr. Henry went, he had gathered that death sooner or later must come to him. It gave him no shock: he had seemed to know beforehand what the fiat would be.

Notwithstanding, it was altogether a very serious vista, and yet a sensation of strange peace seemed to fill his heart. How he had shrunk from ascertaining the true nature of his disease, from the consequent absolute cessation from toil, which he knew would be imposed, he alone knew. All for the sake of his mother, her home, her interests. Over and over again he had asked himself, who would work for them when he could not. As if the delay would alter the evil, it was for this he had put off seeking to know the truth; he had dreaded it as one, unprepared, dreads death; and now that it was spoken, instead of the torment and trouble it might have brought, he felt nothing but resignation and sweet peace.

It was but another great mercy, this feeling, from the loving and merciful Father: and Mr. Henry had learnt to trust Him in all things, with the simple, reliant, undoubting trust that a child feels in its earthly parents; in darkness as well as light; in gloom as well as brightness. Oh, my boys, how I wish I could make you understand what this trust is, and how to acquire it! It is the one great blessing in life; the only true peace; a pearl of great price. It is a sure and safe refuge; an ever-present comfort in sunshine and in storm; a resort that is never closed. Every grief, every care, every doubt, had Henry Paradyne learnt to carry THERE, and he knew that it could not fail him. "Things seem dark and dreary; I cannot see my way; undertake for me, Lord!" had been latterly the burden of his prayer. He never failed to rise up comforted, to *know* that God had been with him, lending His gracious ear, listening compassionately to his cry: there were times when he seemed to have been talking with Him face to face,

a joy so heavenly was diffused throughout his spirit. My boys, you perhaps hold an idea that religion (as it is very commonly called) is but a gloomy thing; let me tell you that the real religion, as experienced by those who live thus near to God, is as a very light of happiness. It will not come to you all at once; but it will surely come with time if you earnestly desire it. Think what it is to possess a refuge *always*, one that cannot fail! In danger and sorrow, in doubt and difficulty, in trouble and storm, there you may go, and kneeling say, "I cannot see my way; I am threatened on all sides; my fears overwhelm me. Oh, Father of mercies, I put myself into Thy hands; guide me, act for me, love me!" I tell you that, to those who have learnt it, this trust is as a ray direct from heaven, a glimpse of it before its time. With the necessity for comfort, comfort had come, and Mr. Henry was at rest.

He made his way home again. Just as he was entering his house, he heard himself

called to, and turning saw Sir Simon Orville.

"I've come on a fishing expedition," cried the knight, who seemed all in a flurry with the haste he had made.

"A fishing expedition!" repeated Mr. Henry with a smile and air as tranquil as though—as though he had not been on a visit to the great physician, and brought that knowledge home with him. Sir Simon glanced around, wishing to make sure that nobody was within hearing.

The facts were these. Raymond Trace returned to his father the previous night with the account of what he had been able to do with Mr. Henry: or, rather, what he had *not* been able to do. Mr. Trace, by some logic of reasoning, adopted the information as a proof that the stranger was undoubtedly Hopper, and went home to Pond Place in a state of mind not to be envied. The chief torment was the uncertainty. If the man in hiding was *not* Hopper, the inconvenience of going away from him was not to be thought

of pleasantly; for, truth to say, Mr. Trace did not possess so much as a handful of silver to go with: if the man *was* Hopper, go he must, whatever the cost. He imparted his doubts to Sir Simon, just relating the story told by Raymond—that there was somebody in hiding at Mrs. Butter's, who might, perhaps, be Hopper—and no more. Sir Simon, detecting the anxiety, and a little wondering at it—for, as he reiterated over and over again to his brother-in-law, rogues could not threaten gentlemen in England with impunity—undertook to appeal to Mr. Henry himself the first thing in the morning, and get the matter set at rest.

"This is the third time I have come here this morning, Mr. Henry. You've been gadding about London," good-humouredly added Sir Simon, in supreme unconsciousness of what the "gadding" had been. "And now, as I say, I am come fishing, and I hope you'll not let me throw out my line in vain."

Mr. Henry led the way indoors. Nobody was about; Mrs. Butter's kitchen door was

shut, and Sir Simon talked on, believing they were alone, as soon as he was in the passage.

"My nephew, Raymond Trace, was questioning you, last night, Mr. Henry, as to some man he had seen you with in the plantation. You thought it was impertinent curiosity, no doubt, and very properly refused to satisfy him; but I want you to tell me. Is there anybody staying here in private, or is there not? And if there is, what's his name?"

Mr. Henry laid his hat and gloves on the table, rubbed his handkerchief across his damp brow: it was strange how a very little exertion would put him into a heat now: and led the way to his parlour. "I wish I could tell you, Sir Simon," he answered, with a smile. "I would have told your nephew had I been able."

"Can you assure me that there is nobody staying in the house?"

What was Mr. Henry to answer? To say There is not, would have been untrue: to say There is, might bring somebody trouble.

"Let me tell you why I ask," cried Sir

Simon, who was by far too open-minded a man to succeed in any matter that required craft. "A friend of mine, at present in this neighbourhood, has an idea that he is being looked after for a debt he owes: he got to hear, by hook or by crook, that some rather suspicious-looking stranger had been seen talking to you, might even be in this house; he thinks it may be his creditor, and seems to be pretty near out of his senses with fright. That's just the truth."

"I wish with all my heart I had got a debtor in this part of the world," cried the voice of a strange head, putting itself in at the door: and the interruption was so unexpected that Sir Simon backed a few paces in surprise.

"Why, Tom!" he exclaimed. "Is it you?"

"Yes, it's me," answered Tom Brabazon, forgetting his grammar. "Excuse my having listened. I am not afraid of you, Sir Simon, but what are you asking questions about me for?"

"It was not about you I was asking. Is *this* the friend Raymond saw you speaking to?" continued Sir Simon, turning to Mr. Henry.

"Yes it is. You perceive it was not my own secret."

"Tell your friend, Sir Simon, that I've more need to run away from him than he from me," interposed Tom Brabazon. "Here I am; under a deuced cloud; tormenting Mother Butter out of her daily wits, frightening my sister at odd and even hours, worrying Mr. Henry to fiddlestrings. They are getting up a scheme of emigration for me, Emma, and the doctor, but funds run scarce with him just now, and he thinks I'm in Whitecross Street. The safest place going, he says, for me. It won't do to tell him I'm here."

"I'll contribute to the emigration, Tom," cried Sir Simon, his benevolent eyes glistening. "I'll try and make things straighter for you with the doctor. Mr. Henry has been keeping your secret, I see."

"In first-rate style, too! He has done all

sorts of things for me: borne with my temper when I've invaded his room at night; gone to and fro with messages for Emma; bought my smoke for me, for old Butter said she'd not, and stands to it. What a droll man that friend of yours must be, to be afraid of *me!*"

"But, you see, Tom, we thought it was somebody else," returned Sir Simon, who really understood less than ever his brother-in-law's anxiety. But the relief to that gentleman would no doubt be very great.

Sir. Simon, ever good natured, trotted off home to impart the welcome news, and Mr. Henry, not staying to take anything, but saying he would be back immediately, went his way to the college. His object was only to report himself back, for he intended to take his duties in the afternoon. Not until the following day should be over—the great one of the Orville examination—would he disturb Dr. Brabazon with his ailments. The sky was blue and somewhat wintry, the leaves were falling, the air seemed to strike upon him with a chill. But that sweet peace, dif-

fusing itself within, was whispering comfort: he might be taken, but his mother—he saw it with a sure prevision—would be sheltered under the good care of God.

Not redolent of peace, certainly, were the sounds that greeted his ear as he came to the quadrangle, or the sight that met his astonished gaze. His back propped against a pillar, his honest grey eyes flashing with anger, his arms outstretched to ward off blows, was George Paradyne.

It has been said that no opportunity occurred for an outbreak on Paradyne during morning study. That over, the row began. He was caught up in passing through the quadrangle, on his way home, and surrounded. Yelling, shouting, kicking, hitting, a hundred inflamed faces were turned upon him at once, a hundred arms and legs put out their aggressive strength. The seniors, who first raised the storm, had not intended it to take this turn, but they were powerless to stem the torrent now, and so some of them went in for it. The boy put his back against a

pillar, and stood his ground bravely, fencing off blows as he best could, hitting back again, his whole face glowing with scorn for his assailants, and for the unequal conflict. Suddenly Bertie Loftus appeared: he had been indoors, and knew nothing of it: and stood for a moment in surprised astonishment. Pushing through the crowd with his great strength, great when he put his indolence off and his metal on, he took up a position side by side with Paradyne.

"Look here, you fellows, I'll have no more of this. You ought to be ashamed of your manners: I am, for you; disgracing yourselves in this fashion! Trace! Brown major! Talbot! Whitby!—all you strong ones—I call upon you to beat the throng off. Dick, you young fool, be a man if you can!"

He spoke with the authority of the acting senior, but he was not obeyed as the real one. The boys' passions were up. None of them saw that a stranger who happened to be passing, had halted at the great gates to look on, and was standing in amazement.

Bertie's words made some temporary impression, and there came a lull in the storm.

"Now then," he cried, taking advantage of the silence, "wait, all of you. Let us bring a little reason to bear, and don't go in for this row, as if you were so many Irish jackasses met at a fighting fair. Trace, the affair is yours if it's anybody's; you raised it; suppose you explain to Paradyne what the matter is."

"Suppose you explain yourself," retorted Trace, terribly vexed at being thus publicly called upon.

"It is not my business," said Bertie. "You know, you all know, I have not joined the cabal."

"Let Paradyne take himself off, and have done with it," roared a voice: and a Babel of tongues followed, each one taking the explanation on itself. The late Mr. Paradyne was called everything but a gentleman, some of the names being remarkably choice. George, with flashing eyes and earnestly indignant words, denied the truth of the charges, and stood up as bravely (morally) for

his father, as he did physically for himself. He kept his place and defied the lot, Bertie protecting him.

"Wasn't he a sneak? Wasn't he a swindler? Didn't he go in for everything that was low and bad and dishonest, and then poison himself?" roared the malcontents, hustling and jostling each other.

"No; he was neither a sneak nor a swindler; he went in for nothing that was bad, and he did not poison himself," retorted George. "Look here—you, Lamb—when you were accused of firing off the pistol that shot the earl, were you not innocent?"

"Of course I was innocent," roared Lamb.

"But your innocence did not prevent your being accused. When that straw man was set ablaze to frighten Mother Butter, I had nothing to do with it, as you are all aware, I did not even know of it, but Baker accused me, and gave me the cane. Well, it was just so with my father. He was accused, being perfectly innocent, and before the proofs of his innocence could be brought

forth, before almost he had time to deny it, before he well understood what the charge was, he died: the excitement killed him. Loftus—and I thank you for standing by me now, and I know you have never worked against me as some of the rest have—I told your father this in Boulogne, and I think he grew to believe me. If you have anything to bring against me, you fellows, bring it; but you shall not traduce my father. What have *you* to say, Trace?"

"I am sorry you force me to speak, Paradyne," returned Trace, his quiet voice, civil still, rising above the hubbub. "I say that your father *was* guilty, and that you had no right to come here amidst honest men's sons. We have put up with the companionship; the Head Master forced us to it; and have kept your secret from the rest; and should have kept it to the end but for your attempting to go up for the Orville. It was pure audacity, that, and you were exceedingly ill-advised to think of it. No fellow whose father had dirty hands—— "

George Paradyne laid his hand on Trace's mouth, sharply enough, though it was not a blow. It was the signal for renewed hostilities. Trace drew away, but many of the others hit out; Bertie Loftus and George being on the defensive. It was at this moment that Mr. Henry came up; he interposed with more authority than Bertie possessed; but the boys turned their derisive backs upon him, and kicked out behind. Mr. Henry was not to be put down: never was authority more uncompromising than his, when he chose to exert it. He pressed forward and stood before the assailants; he stopped the blows with his firm but gentle hands, he spoke words of calm good sense, his soothing voice hushed the noise and rancour. It was as if magic were at work, or some expert mesmerist: the angry feelings subsided; the boys' passions were allayed: the fierce storm had become a calm.

"Enough of this for now. George, you go home. Gentlemen, make way for him if you please. As to the Orville, which, as I

gather, is the bone of contention, his going up for it, or the contrary, is for the decision of the Head Master; not for yours. Disperse quietly, every one."

In after-days, when the boys should think over this little episode in their school life, some wonder might arise in their minds how it was that they had so implicitly obeyed. It is true Mr. Henry made a slight allusion —it was nothing more—to certain divine mandates, that clearly do not enjoin quarrelling and fighting and evil passions, rather, peace and love: but the boys did not at the moment seem to think much of that. It was ever so: come upon what scene of conflict he would, Mr. Henry was sure to turn it into peace. The boys flitted indoors, one and all, Bertie Loftus bringing up the rear; and Mr. Henry went inside the cloisters and sat down on the narrow base of a stone pillar as if his strength or his breath failed him. George Paradyne, looking round from the small gate, happened to catch sight of his face, and came back, asking if he felt ill.

"It's nothing," said Mr. Henry; but the wan face, the panting breath seemed to belie the words. "Wait a moment, George: I want to speak to you. I think you had better withdraw your name for the Orville."

"Not I. Look here, Arthur—and I'll be hanged if I care, though they hear me call you so—this attack upon papa makes me all the more resolute to go in and *win*. Good-bye; I shall be round this evening."

George ran on. At the great gates stood the stranger still, looking and listening. A man of thirty, or thereabouts, with reddish hair. As George rushed by, a thought arose that he had seen the face somewhere before: but he was in a hurry and took no particular notice.

"A nice row, that, for college gents," cried the stranger, ignoring ceremony. "And so you are George Paradyne! How you have grown!"

George stopped, naturally; and devoured the face with his eyes. As the light of recollection dawned upon him, he darted

close to the man, and cried out with a great cry.

"You are Abel Hopper!"

"Just so. But I didn't expect to see you in these parts."

It was indeed Hopper, the ex-clerk at Liverpool. The coincidence was curious, had we time to follow it out—that the real Hopper should make his appearance just as the fears of Mr. Trace should have been set at rest as to the false one.

"You see the life that is mine; the disgrace that clings to me," panted George, in his impulsive emotion. "If you have a spark of manly feeling, you will speak out and clear my father's memory, even though at the cost of criminating yourself."

Hopper stared at George with a questioning gaze. "I don't know what you mean," he said. "You must talk plainer, young sir."

"Yes, you do know. You know—don't you—that my father was innocent?"

"I do know it. He was innocent."

"And that you were guilty."

"No; that I swear I was not."

The accent wore a sound of truth, and George paused. "Then who was guilty?"

Hopper laughed as he crossed the road to the plantation. "We may come at that, perhaps, Master George, by-and-by. All in good time."

"But it is not all in good time," cried George, pursuing him. "Oh, come with me to my mother! She has believed him guilty; and it has embittered her heart, and changed her nature, and made a misery of our daily life. Only come and show her that he was innocent!"

But Hopper only went on all the quicker, and the sound of George's voice died away in the distance. Mr. Henry had seen and heard nothing of this. Some of the boys were coming out again with bats in their hands. Trace was one: but he carried a book, not a bat. They wondered what the German was sitting there for. Trace went up to him, and spoke.

"The part you acted just now was

uncalled for, though I did not stop it before the school. Interference on Paradyne's behalf from you is particularly out of place."

"I think not, Trace."

"You think not! When you know who you are! A man who is here under a false name; whose life is a lie; is not one to——"

Trace stopped. The boys had been nearer than he thought, and were listening with eager ears. Mr. Henry got up and walked away.

"Trace, what did you mean?" came the eager questioning voices. "Who *is* he?"

And Trace told them. Betrayed out of his usual civil prudence, or perhaps tired of concealment, at last he disclosed the secret he had so recently learnt. It was another Paradyne.

Another Paradyne! Another of the bad brood! Trace, giving his nose a contemptuous twist, pointed a finger of scorn after the receding master: and the boys stared in stupid wonder. Another Paradyne!

CHAPTER X.

BEFORE THE EXAMINERS.

THE great day had come, big with the fate of the Orville, All Saints' Day, the First of November. In the large hall, made ready for the occasion, wearing their gowns, their trenchers laid beside them, sat the candidates, before the gentlemen who had come from other parts and schools to preside with the masters of the college. It might, on the face of things, have been almost called a solemn farce, this sitting there in conclave, this great examination, confined to one day and to the formal routine of questioning, but that it was known the true adjudicator of the prize was Dr. Brabazon, who had pro-

bably decided beforehand upon the victor. Essays and papers on various subjects had been prepared and given in previously by the candidates; these had been examined, and their respective merits adjudicated upon by the masters in their several departments, whose opinions as to individual merit were conveyed to the Head Master in sealed notes. It had been impossible for Mr. Henry to assign the palm in his branches, French and German, to any other than Paradyne; but the just and impartial tone of his mind might be seen by the fact that he had appended to his decision a memorandum, calling the Head Master's attention to the fact of George Paradyne's partly foreign education; thus leaving it to Dr. Brabazon whether the proficiency should be allowed to weigh in the contest. He need not have troubled, for, after all, now that the trial had come, Paradyne did not go up for it.

A sort of disturbance took place the previous night about Paradyne. Mr. Jebb, made acquainted with the cabal in the

quadrangle, had carried the grievance to the Head Master, and the candidates were called into the study, Paradyne excepted. Gall, who had come back, made one of them. Sir Simon Orville was sitting with the Master—which was unexpected. The question to be decided was this: was Paradyne, with his burden of inherited disgrace, to be allowed to compete for the Orville with themselves, who had no such inheritance, and repudiated all possibility of disgrace on their own score, present and future, and for their forefathers in the past. The matter was settled by Sir Simon, who scarcely allowed the Head Master to put in a word edgeways, even to acquiesce. He said that if Paradyne was excluded from the trial, his nephews, Loftus and Trace, should not go up for it, nor Gall either, for he should take upon himself to act for his friend, Gall the elder, who was a very particular enemy to oppression in any shape. It decided the question. Gall and Talbot at once spoke up, saying they had never wished Paradyne not

to try; Loftus said the same; Brown major, with round eyes, avowed an opinion that it would be horribly unfair to Paradyne to deprive him of the chance, and he had always privately thought so, though he *had* gone in for the row against him. Dr. Brabazon dismissed the lot with a covert reprimand, and Trace, speaking a private word with Sir Simon, learnt that the man whom he had seen with Mr. Henry was not the dreaded Hopper. The news consoled Trace in some degree for this unwelcome decision, and he was uncharitable enough to hope that individual had been drowned.

But on this, the eventful morning, a note had been delivered to the Head Master from George Paradyne, saying he withdrew from the contest. And perhaps the master was not in his heart sorry, for it put an end to a matter of strife that had been somewhat difficult to deal with.

How had George Paradyne been won over to do this? you may be asking in surprise. In the first place, Hopper had—so to say—

eaten his words. George had found out where he was staying, at a small obscure inn beyond the station, and went to him in the evening, pressing the man to say who was really guilty. Hopper could only be brought to respond in a joking, derisive sort of way; but insisted that the guilty man was really Captain Paradyne. "You know it was your father, after all," he said emphatically to George; and his look and tone were so sincere, that George's heart sunk, for the first time, with a doubt that it had been. In this frame of mind, his spirit subdued almost to despondency, George went round to Mr. Henry's; and when the latter urged him again to give up the Orville, George received the advice in silence.

"You think it right, then, that I should yield to this cabal against me?"

"It is not altogether that, George," said Mr. Henry, who was lying upon three chairs, and spoke slowly, as if in pain. "They are all against you, and perhaps it is not right that one should hold out in opposition to the

many. Not on that account would I so strenuously urge it, but on another. There is little doubt that the real contest will lie between you and Trace."

"And as little doubt that I shall beat him in it," added George.

"Yes, I believe you would. Well, George, do a generous action and withdraw from it for his sake. Let Trace get it. That past wrong upon him can never be wiped out by us; but we, you and I, may do a trifle now and then of kindness to him, perform some little sacrifice or other in requital of it. *I* have been ever seeking for the opportunity since I came here; it is one reason why I have been always urging you to peaceful endurance, rather than active resentment; George, be generous now."

And George Paradyne was at length won over to this view. His mother, in her haughty resentment against the school for their treatment of him that day, had already urged it. The note of renouncement was written to the Head Master, and one candidate's chance for

the coveted prize was over. It was made known just before the examination began, after the morning service in the chapel.

"It will be Trace's now," cried the boys with shouts of victory. "Trace, old fellow, here's wishing you joy! The rest might as well give in at once."

"It is not for the sake of the benefit," disclaimed Trace, his cheeks wearing their salmon-coloured tinge of satisfaction, "but for the honour it will bring. It would have been out of the order of just things for that tainted fellow to gain it over me."

Of course. But nevertheless there was a feeling on some of them—led to, perhaps, by a word of Gall's—that it was an unfair thing for Paradyne to have been put out of the trial.

The long table was removed from the middle of the hall—the sweating hall it was called that day—and the candidates sat across it, before the masters and the gentlemen. One of the masters was not there—Mr. Henry, and it was supposed he was resent-

ing the defeat of Paradyne. Let us leave them to their work.

The rest of the boys had a holiday; and highly agreeable they found it; although an order had been appended to the privilege that no noise whatever should be made within bounds, to the disturbance of the examiners. This rendered them a little uncertain what to do with themselves, until it entered into the bright head of Brown minor to propose to "have it out with Mother Butter." About ten of them started on this laudable errand, chiefly second desk boys. But when they arrived at that estimable lady's residence, they found that she was abroad and her kitchen locked up.

It was a disappointment. There was no paint convenient to paint the door green, as they had the cow, or they might have tried their hand at it. They stood disconsolate.

"Let's take a look at old Henry in his sulks!" cried Mr. Smart, briskly. "Fancy his not showing at the examination!"

"And ask him how he relishes Paradyne's being put out," added Lamb.

"Won't it be jolly!" said Dick Loftus, beginning to dance.

They turned to the door. Mr. Henry's assumed sullenness at Paradyne's defeat was set down partly to the special fact that he had coached that gentleman, partly to his mortification at the disclosure that he was not himself but somebody else. Trace had favoured the school with all particulars. This would be almost as good fun as Mother Butter.

"Let's give a postman's knock, or he mayn't open it," whispered Leek.

A postman's knock they gave; so far as fists upon a parlour door could imitate that sound. It was not so distinct as it might have been, from the fact that too many hands gave it in too many places. Mr. Henry's voice called out, "Come in," not very distinctly. And in they went. The room was empty, but in the small bed-chamber opening from it, the door thrown

wide, they saw their master. He was in bed, sitting up in it, not lying, leaning back against some cushions.

Ah yes, the incapability had come, all too soon. Had he seen the physician to-day instead of yesterday, there had been no need of the injunction, to give up work, to stay away from the college. The disease had shown itself rapidly and unmistakably; the power of exertion had left him. And there he lay; a desperate pain at his heart, and the crimson of hectic on his cheeks.

Appearances were so unlike "sullenness," or anything else they expected to find, that the invading crew stood in sudden discomfiture of spirit. Two or three of them began to back out; but Mr. Henry held out both his hands with a sweet smile of welcome.

"I hoped some of you might come to see me this holiday, when you knew I was ill. Thank you all, my dear lads."

"But we didn't come to see you because you were ill; we didn't know it," cried truthful, open Dick. "I'm afraid we came

for something else. We thought you were stopping away in vexation, sir, because Paradyne was not going up for the Orville."

Mr. Henry gently shook his head. "It is by my advice that Paradyne does not go up. I should have been vexed if he had. And now tell me how you are spending your holiday."

He seemed to speak with a slow, faint voice, and breath that did not come so freely as it ought. The boys made no answer. They were taking in everything, and had not yet regained their audacity. Lamb had fully meant to address him as Mr. Paradyne, and go in for a sneer, but somehow could not readily get the name out, and felt crestfallen in consequence.

"Are you staying away on account of illness, Mr. Henry?" asked Leek.

"Don't you see that I am?"

"But the examination's on!" cried Leek, who could not understand any illness to be as important as the trial for the Orville.

"I wish I could have gone," Mr. Henry

replied. "I lay very still all night hoping to get strength to appear, but it proved useless."

"When shall you be well enough to come back to college?" asked Dick Loftus, in rather a subdued tone.

Mr. Henry took one of Dick's hands in his; with the other he clasped Leek's. He did not reply at once, only looked out at them all with a strangely affectionate gaze.

"Should you miss me very much if I were never to come back again?"

"But you *are* coming back?" exclaimed Brown minor, leaning forward on the foot of the bed.

"I think not. I fear not. I have thought for some little time now that this might be the ending. But it has come on very rapidly."

"You—don't mean," hesitated Brown, "that you are—going to die?"

"I fear it may be so."

The boys stood awe-struck. Their hearts seemed to have stopped beating.

"But, Mr. Henry — what a dreadful thing!"

"Oh, boys, it may be a happy thing. God knows what is best for me."

"Why don't you have a doctor?"

"Your friend Mrs. Butter's gone for one now," he answered, with a smile. "And I went into London yesterday morning and saw a great physician. It was the cause of my absence from class."

They remembered the absence quickly enough, and also the row in the quadrangle afterwards, which he had quelled.—Had that disturbance anything to do with this sudden increase of illness? The physician might have said it had.

Going to die! A terrible shadow, as of remorse for unkindness rendered, fell upon them as they stood. They called to mind how they had treated him; how uniformly kind and forgiving and generous he had been to them in spite of it, and of the peace he had contrived to shed.

Leek's conscience began to prick him.

"Is your illness caused by the trouble you have had with us boys, Mr. Henry?" he asked, remembering the promise he had given that day in the Strand, and how soon he had forgotten it.

"No, no. It may have helped it on a little: I can't tell."

Dick Loftus's heart was collapsing more than anybody's; it was one of the tenderest breathing. "I wish the time would come over again!" cried the boy, in his flood-tide of repentance. "I've been worse than any of them. I hope you'll never forgive me."

"Not forgive you!" cried Mr. Henry, regarding him tenderly with his luminous eyes. "There's nothing to forgive. It seems that you have always been kind to me. You have let me give you many a private lesson, and take your part in many a dispute. Thank you for it all, Dick."

"But that has been doing kindness to me," debated Dick.

"And to do you kindness, Dick, is one of

the things I have lived for," said Mr. Henry, softly. "I am a Paradyne, you know; I have had a great debt upon me."

Dick could not see the argument, although Mr. Henry was a Paradyne. Brown minor interposed with an opportune question.

"Does the Head Master know of your illness, Mr. Henry?"

"Yes. He's coming round when the day's work's over."

"Trace will have the Orville."

"Oh, yes, I hope so."

The boys began to back out. Illness that might be about to terminate in death, nobody knew how soon, was what they were not accustomed to. It seemed to strike upon them as disheartening; not to mention a sense of awkwardness in the manners that was anything but agreeable. They had gone in, impudent and noisy; they went out humbly on tiptoe. At the garden gate they encountered Mother Butter, and did not molest her, or pay her a single compliment; to that lady's infinite astonishment, who

came to the conclusion that they must have been "cowed" by a flogging all round.

Dick Loftus sat down on the stump of a tree in the playground. Dick, for the first time in his life, was supping sorrow. He did not look at the past in the light Mr. Henry appeared to do, when he spoke of the debt left on him by Captain Paradyne; but he remembered what the universal kindness (about which he had never previously thought) had been, and he knew that he who had shown it was passing rapidly away.

With an aching of the heart that Dick had never felt,—with the consciousness of that bitter sin, ingratitude, breaking its refrain on his brain, Dick started to his feet again, and dashed after Brown minor, taking a knife from his pocket as he ran. It was a recent acquisition, bought with some money that Dick had been saving for the purpose, and prized accordingly. Mr. Brown was astride on a gymnastic pole.

"Look here, Brown: you wanted to buy my knife for three shillings the other day,

and I laughed at you. You shall have it now. It cost four-and-sixpence."

Brown minor, a regular screw at a bargain, took the knife in his hand for a critical examination. "I'd not give that now, Dick. You've used it."

"I've not hurt it," answered Dick. "I haven't a penny in my pocket," he continued ruefully; "I want money for something, or I'd not sell it. What will you give?"

"I don't mind two shillings."

Dick tossed over the knife and held out his hand for the money. Brown gave eighteenpence; it was all he had about him, he said, and promised the other sixpence later. Dick took the available cash and started off to the shops. Half an hour later Mr. Henry was disturbed by his sudden entrance with a cargo of treasures.

Three sour oranges, but the best Dick could get; an apple as large as a child's head; some almond rock; two bath buns; an ounce of cough lozenges; and Captain Marryat's novel "Snarley Yow," which he

had gone in trust for. These several articles he tumbled out upon the bed.

"If you will try an orange, or a piece of the rock, Mr. Henry, you'll be sure to like them," said Dick earnestly. "And the book's beautiful. You'll laugh yourself into fits over it."

Mr. Henry caught the boy's hands, his eyes glistening with dew: "Thank you very much, Dick! God bless you. This kindness does me good."

He did not damp the generous ardour by saying that the purchases would be useless to him: rather did he seem to make much of the collection in his grateful good nature. And Dick Loftus, wringing the delicate hand, turned tail and bustled out again: for his eyes were glistening too.

CHAPTER XI.

FALLING FROM A PINNACLE.

YOU might decidedly have thought that Mr. Raymond Trace was treading upon air. But that it was almost dark—for the examination had only terminated when the shades of evening fell—his bearing might have excited the admiration of his fellows. His back was upright, his face was lifted; pride and self-sufficiency puffed him out. He had come out well before the examiners, and there could be no moral doubt that the prize would be his. Talbot had also done well—they were about upon a par; but Trace and everybody else knew that Talbot, his junior in the college, would not be preferred

to him. The examiners had complimented him; the Head Master had shaken hands with him; Trace felt elevated to the seventh heaven, and was walking forth to impart the glorious news at Sir Simon's.

Treading upon air. His gown was thrown back from his shoulders, his trencher sat jauntily on his head, his boots creaked, his feet seemed not to touch the ground. Just before he turned in at Sir Simon's gate, he saw two people turn out of it, and recognized George Paradyne and his mother. Trace vouchsafed no notice whatever, and thought it very like their impudence to be there. George, who did not recognize him at the first moment, ran after him inside the grounds.

"Have you gained the prize, Trace?" he asked, as he caught him up.

"It has not pleased the Head Master to proclaim who has gained it or who has not," answered Trace, turning, and speaking with the same sort of accent he might have used to a dog.

"But I suppose you feel sure of it?"

"I have felt that all along. I *am* sure now."

"That's right," cried George heartily. "I am glad I gave up to you! If I have been secretly chafing over it all day, I'm only thankful now."

"Glad you gave up to me!" retorted Trace. "You did not give up to me; you were forced to give up because you couldn't help yourself."

"I gave up to you indeed, Trace; that you might get it. It was through Mr. Henry; he persuaded me: and I'm heartily glad of it as things have turned out. Good-bye, old fellow! I won't keep you now; but I'll stand by you through all, Trace. Mind that."

Scarcely according a moment's thought to the ambiguous words, except to resent their insolence, Trace gave his shoulders a shake, metaphorically shaking off George Paradyne, and went on his way of triumph. Ah, boys! how often when we are at the very height of

prosperity, is a fall near! as you go through life you will remark it. That was the last hour of pride to Raymond Trace.

He rang grandly at the hall-bell—as became a senior fellow who was above the ordinary run of mortals, and had just gained the Orville. "Is Mr. Trace in the dining-room?" he asked of Thomas, rubbing his shoes on the inner mat, and handing him his gown and trencher.

A simple question, however lordly put, but Thomas answered it in a peculiar way. He dropped his voice to a confidential whisper, and laid his fore-finger on Trace's shoulder, as if there were some mystery in the house.

"He's not here, Mr. Raymond. He is safe off."

"Safe off!" exclaimed Trace. "What do you mean?"

"He is gone, sir. I let him out at the back-lawn window, with his carpet-bag, as soon as it was dusk."

Trace stared at the man. "What is he gone for?"

"There's some trouble afoot, Mr. Raymond, and your father has gone away out of it. He was looking like a ghost. Mr. Loftus is telegraphed for, and we think he may get here to-night by a late train."

"But what is the trouble?" asked Trace, a strange feeling of vague dismay stealing over him.

Thomas shook his head. "I don't rightly know what it is, sir. A man of the name of Hopper brought it, I fancy, and he's in there now with Sir Simon"—pointing to the dining-room. "I dare say you can go in, Mr. Raymond," he added, advancing to open the door. "Mrs. Paradyne has just gone."

It had been an eventful day. While Raymond Trace was flourishing his acquirements and his proficiency before learned men, fate, so cross-grained at times, was working elsewhere no end of ill. On the hearthrug, when he went in, stood Sir Simon and Hopper. Hopper left them, and Sir Simon prepared to enter upon an explanation. Trace set himself to listen; a moisture

as of some awful dread, breaking out upon his brow.

It appeared that Hopper had been dodging about the neighbourhood the past day and part of this, stealthily looking after Mr. Trace, and endeavouring by covert inquiries to ascertain whether or not he was in it; which plan he adopted for certain private reasons, rather than apply boldly at Sir Simon's, and make open inquiry. He could learn nothing. Nobody had seen any such person about, as he described Mr. Trace to be. This afternoon, he met Mrs. Paradyne close to her house, and she caused him to enter. Full of her griefs and grievances, she spoke out unreservedly, especially of this latter grievance of George's treatment about the Orville Prize; that he should have been forced to put himself out of it that young Trace might win.

Hopper listened. He seemed struck with the injustice dealt to the boy. He could but sympathize with Mrs. Paradyne—who had been kind to him in the days gone by, when

he was a poor friendless clerk—and her misfortunes; with her changed face, with the tears that she once in her life let fall, overcome by the old associations his presence brought; and in a rash fit of generosity, he avowed solemnly to her that the misfortunes were unmerited, for her late husband was *not the guilty man.* He appeared to repent of this confidence almost as soon as given, and went away, asking her to keep it strictly to herself.

Keep it to herself! not Mrs. Paradyne. The disclosure had fallen on her in the light of a revelation; the belief maintained in her husband's guilt swept itself from her mind at a single stroke, and she marvelled at her credulous blindness. It seemed to change the current of her life's blood, the knowledge; to restore to her the energy she had lost. Never so much as giving a thought to Hopper's request for secresy, deeming it wholly unreasonable, Mrs. Paradyne took her way to Sir Simon Orville's, requested a private interview, and told her tale. Sir

Simon, impressed by the energetic words, caught up the conviction that the unfortunate Captain Paradyne had been really innocent. He could not call Mr. Trace to the council because that gentleman had gone to London by train and was not yet back.

"And who was guilty?—who was guilty, my dear lady?" cried Sir Simon. "Did Hopper tell you that?"

"No; he would not say. I pressed the question urgently on him," continued Mrs. Paradyne; "but could get no answer. All he said was, that it was inconvenient just yet to disclose it."

"The guilty man was himself," said Sir Simon.

"I do not think so," answered Mrs. Paradyne. "His manner did not strike me as that of a guilty man."

Sir Simon nodded, but did not by words maintain his opinion. He quitted the room, took prompt measures, and in a very short while, Mr. Hopper found himself under convoy to Pond Place, somewhat against his will.

There, very much to his surprise, he was accused by Sir Simon of the past frauds. At first Hopper laughed at it; but he soon found it a matter all too earnest; that he was about to be consigned to the protection of the law. In self-defence he made a clean breast of the truth, and avowed that the real culprit was—Robert Trace.

Sir Simon Orville felt something like a stag at bay. He listened to the particulars like a man in a dream: never, never had his doubts touched on this. And Mr. Trace, who returned home during the recital, and was told by Thomas that Sir Simon was engaged on business, went straight to his chamber, all unconscious that the business concerned him, and that he had been seen to enter and was recognized by Hopper.

"I suspected Mr. Trace from the very first," observed Hopper, continuing his story to Sir Simon. "A singular occurrence, though trifling enough in itself, led to my doing so: and I thought it was beyond the

range of probability that Mr. Paradyne, so simple-minded and honourable, could be guilty. But Mr. Paradyne died before anything could be proved or disproved, and the guilt was supposed to have died with him. Mr. Trace hushed the matter up. People said how lenient he was; but I looked upon the leniency, which was foreign to his usual mode of doing business, as another reason for doubting him. I was not sure, but I quietly set to work to track out my clue; I had one to go upon; and I tracked it out surely and safely. The result was what I had anticipated—Robert Trace was the guilty man. Never, sure, was one so lucky before! had Mr. Paradyne but lived four-and-twenty hours, the farce could not have been kept up. Ask him, Sir Simon, whether I am right or not," concluded the worthy Hopper. "I know he is here."

"If you knew all this, why did you not denounce him at the time?" growled Sir Simon, who was feeling terribly scandalized by the whole thing.

"Because he had sailed for America l
I had finished tracking it out."

"And you followed him there!
worried his life nearly out of him, tryi
make your own game. I see now; I u
stand it all," added the aggrieved knigl
thoughts going back to the semi-explan
of Hopper's conduct and claims, given
by Mr. Trace.

"Anybody else would have done the
in my place, sir," was the self-exc
answer. "It was better for him t
should keep the affair hushed up, than
claim it."

"And the Paradynes to have lain
the guilt all this while!" groaned
Simon. "What on earth did he do
the money?" he added, the pr
striking him.

"Ah well, that's best known to him
cried Hopper. "He *had* it. He
into ventures under another name, fo
thing."

"Into ventures?"

"Speculations, and that," explained Hopper. "Lots of folks do the same nowadays, more than the world knows of. If successful, they grow into millionaires, and their friends can't make out how; if non-successful, there comes a smash. Ask him, sir, whether it's not all true that I have told you. I saw him come up that path a few minutes ago."

Sir Simon Orville had no need to ask. A conviction that the man did indeed speak truth was within him, sure and certain as a light of revelation. He followed Mr. Trace to his chamber and accused him, speaking quietly and sadly; and Mr. Trace finding that Hopper was below, felt scared out of his senses. The time for denial was past: Robert Trace, believing himself overtaken by the destiny that seemed so long to have been pursuing him, did not attempt to make any. Sir Simon, locked in with him, saw how it was—that the hunted man was, and had been all these years, at his ex-clerk's mercy.

"I never intended to accuse Paradyne," said Mr. Trace with abject lips. "Loftus got meddling with the accounts, a thing he had not done for years, and found something was wrong. For appearance sake, I was obliged to go through the books with him; and then to agree with him that fraud must be at work. It was Loftus who accused Paradyne; there was no one else whom it was possible to suspect; it was Loftus who ordered him to be taken into custody: and I could not say the man was innocent without betraying myself. Then came Paradyne's sudden death, and I let the onus of guilt rest upon him."

Sir Simon interposed with but one question. "What became of the money?"

"Private speculations," answered Robert Trace. "There you have the whole."

Yes; Sir Simon had the whole, and now, a little later in the day, Raymond Trace had it. Mr. Trace had made his escape from the house at the dusk hour, while Hopper was still detained with Sir Simon. Hopper

showed every wish, as far as hints could show, to compromise the affair; meaning, that for a sum of money he would hush up Mr. Trace's part in it. Sir Simon dismissed him when Raymond entered: Mr. Hopper gave his address at the inn, and went away in confidence; leaving, as he supposed, Mr. Trace the elder and Sir Simon to talk over any offer they might feel inclined to make him.

Sir Simon disclosed the whole to Raymond: there was no possibility of its being kept from him. The boy—if it be not wrong to call him so—sat very still on a low chair, feeling as if the world, and everything in it bright, and honest, and desirable, were closing to him. If ever a spirit was flung suddenly down on its beam-ends from an exalted pinnacle, it was that of Raymond Trace.

"You cannot go in for the Orville now, Raymond," said Sir Simon to him in a low tone, breaking a long and miserable pause.

Raymond glanced slightly up. "I have gone in for it. And gained it."

"My boy, you know what I mean. You must give up the gain."

The same thought had been beating itself into Trace's conscience. A bitter struggle was there. "You would have let Paradyne gain it and wear it, Uncle Simon, when you thought *his* father guilty!"

"True. But there is a difference in the cases."

As Raymond Trace saw for himself. He sat with his pale face bent, his cold fingers unconsciously pressing his hair off his brow. Sir Simon, sorry to his heart for the signs of pain, laid his own hand compassionately on the cold one.

"Raymond, this disgrace is no more your fault than it was young Paradyne's. Take my advice: look it in the face, now, at first; do your best in it; in time you may live it down. Let it be the turning-point in your life. You have not gone in—I use the language of your college fellows—for a strictly

straightforward course: begin and do so now. It will be as certain to lead you right in the end, as the other will lead you wrong. Begin from this very hour, Raymond."

"I'll do what I can," was the subdued answer. "Where's my father gone?"

"I don't know where until he writes to me. Raymond! your mother, poor thing, knew the truth of this."

Raymond looked up questioningly.

"I am sure of it. I can understand now her bitter sorrow, the shivering dread that used to come over her, her anxiety that I should be kind to the Paradynes. She seemed always to be living in a sort of fear. The knowledge must have killed her."

Trace shivered in his turn. Yes, the knowledge of her husband's guilt, and the fear of its coming to light, must have killed her.

"Have you sent for Mr. Loftus, Uncle Simon?"

"Hours ago. Thomas telegraphed for him."

Raymond rose. It was time for him to

go. He must show himself at college, and attend evening service at chapel as usual. On festivals especially there might be no excuse, and this was All Saints' Day. The great examination had not done away with duties, neither did this private blow of his own. A thought crossed his mind to write a note to the Head Master, and never go back to college again: but it was not feasible. Better, as Sir Simon said, face it out. If he could bring himself to do it!

The contrast nearly overwhelmed him—between this walk out and the recent walk in. He placed his back against a tree in the long avenue, wondering if any misery since the world began had ever been equal to this. As he stood there, the cruelty of his behaviour to the Paradynes came rushing over him in very hideousness. Mr. Henry had once put an imaginary case to him—"Suppose it had been your father who was guilty?"—and that now turned out to be reality. Trace's line of conduct was coming home to him; all its hard-heartedness, all its

sin: a little forgiving gentleness towards the Paradynes, a little loving help to bear their heavy burden, would have cost him nothing; and, oh! the comfort it would have brought to him, now, in his bitter hour. As a man sows so must he reap.

They were filing into the robing-room when he got in. Gall said something about his being late, but Trace took no notice. He had his gown on already, and stood near the door to take up his place.

"Have you heard the news?" asked Gall.

"What news?" was the mechanical response.

"About Mr. Henry. He is dying."

"Dying! Mr. Henry! Who says it?"

"It is quite true, unhappily; he will never get up from his bed again," answered Gall. There was no time for more explanation: the masters were approaching, and the organ was already playing in the chapel.

Once more Trace sat in his place, listening to the lessons as one in a dream. How applicable the first of those lessons was to

his present state of mind, he alone could feel. Gall read it, with his soft, clear voice that in itself was music. It was the fifth chapter of Wisdom to the seventeenth verse. The following are the parts that struck Trace particularly, but you can look out the whole for yourselves, and see whether it was or was not likely to come home to one acting as Trace had done, suffering as he suffered, repenting as he repented. Mr. Henry, dying, was in his mind throughout; or rather, not Mr. Henry, but Arthur Henry Paradyne.

"Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without

honour: now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the Saints! . . . .

"What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by: and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves.

"Even so we in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end, and had no sign of virtue to show; but were consumed in our own wickedness. For the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind: like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm; like as the smoke which is dispersed here and there with a tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day. But the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore

shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them."

Gall's voice ceased. And Trace thought verily that lesson had been specially appointed by Fate to bring his works home to him. In a few minutes there came another shock: one "in grievous sickness" was solemnly prayed for: and he knew it was Mr. Henry. Caring little now whether he were discovered breaking the rules, or not, Trace went after chapel to pay a visit to Mr. Henry. Before he escaped, the boys were upon him with their congratulations. It was the first opportunity afforded them since the day's examination. Trace winced awfully. He wished to respond, "I shall not avail myself of the Orville, though I may have gained it," and thus begin at once to herald in the blow of exposure. But his heart and his voice alike failed him; he *could not* speak the words to that sea of faces.

Sitting up in bed, as he had been all day,

his prayer-book open, and a candle on the stand by his side, was Mr. Henry. He put out his hand and drew Trace near; his face lighting up with the happiest smile.

"You have come to tell me the good news! Thank you for thinking of me. I am so glad that you have gained it!"

"No," said Trace, in a voice half husky, half sullen, "I did not come for that." And there he arrived at a pause. His task was very unpalatable.

"I have been reading the First Lesson for the evening," remarked Mr. Henry. "What a beautiful one it is! A real lesson. One of those that seem to speak direct to our hearts from God."

A colour as of dull salmon tinged Trace's cheeks. But for the loving light thrown on him from the earnest eyes, larger and more luminous than of yore, he might have thought there was a covert shaft intended for him.

"I came to speak to you, Mr. Henry: perhaps I ought now to say Mr. Paradyne. Circumstances have occurred which——Have

you heard any particular news?" broke off Trace.

"Only the good news that you have gained the Orville. Dr. Brabazon has been with me, and he whispered a little word in my ear. I seem to feel so thankful. George will not have given up in vain, either. He said to me last night—with a rueful face, as an argument against what I was urging—'But suppose one of the others should get it, and not Trace?' It is all as it should be."

Trace recalled George Paradyne's recent words; he understood them now. He understood, unhappily, the other words—"Mind, Trace, I'll stand by you through all." George had come forth from Sir Simon's, having learnt what he, Trace, was then in blissful ignorance of. "Why did you urge Paradyne to give up to me?" he asked of Mr. Henry.

"Knowing me now for Mr. Paradyne's son, you will understand how heavily that past calamity, entailed upon you, has lain on me. If I could but have wiped it off! I was

always thinking; have atoned for it in any way! And I could do nothing. It was but a slight matter for George to withdraw from the Orville. And besides, you know the cabal was so great against his trying for it."

The words went down into Raymond Trace's uneasy conscience; that debt seemed as nothing, compared to the one now thrown on him. He dashed into his explanation.

"Circumstances have occurred which show me how very wrong and mistaken my resentment against you and George has been. I will not allude to them; I'm not up to it to-night; but you will hear soon enough what they are. And I came round to say that I am sorry for it; that I repent of it in a degree which no words could express.—You were prayed for in chapel to-night;" continued Trace, after a pause. "The report in the school is that your case is hopeless."

"It is quite so, I fear."

Trace paused, as if to get up his voice, which seemed like himself—very low. "You will say you forgive me before you die?"

"The need of forgiveness lies on my side," said Arthur Paradyne, pressing the cold hand with a grateful pressure. "If you were a little resentful, it was but natural. Say you forgive my poor father!"

"Don't!" cried Trace, with a sort of wail. "I'll come in again another time, when you have learnt to understand better."

"One moment," said Mr. Henry, detaining him. "You seem to have some great sorrow upon you to-night. Is it so?"

"Sorrow!" bitterly echoed Trace. "Ay; one that will last me my life. A sorrow, to which yours has been as nothing."

"I have been picturing you as so full of joy this evening. Trace, you *have* gained the Orville. I know it."

"Yes. But I shall give it up to-night."

"Give up the Orville!"

"I cannot help myself. Good-bye."

Mr. Henry was curious, but he would not question further. Trace's hand was still a prisoner. "When pain is too fresh to be

spoken of, Trace, there is only one thing to do," he gently whispered. "*I* learnt it."

"Yes. What?" asked Trace, rather vacantly.

"*Carry it to God.* And then in time you will learn that it came down to you from Him; came in love. One of those mountains that lie in the road to Heaven, so sharp to the feet in climbing them, so good to look back upon when the summit is gained, the labour done. Good night."

The low persuasive accents lingered on Raymond Trace's ear as he went out into the night; the suffering, kind, gentle face rested on his memory. God help him! God pardon him for the additional thorns he had gratuitously cast on this young man's already thorny path. What a wicked spirit had been his! He had sown thorns and nettles and noxious weeds; and in accordance with the inevitable law of Nature, they had come up to sting and pierce him.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE QUADRANGLE.

ALMOST sooner than perhaps even Trace anticipated, was Mr. Henry (one can't help adhering to the familiar name) to be enlightened; for, as Trace went out of Mrs. Butter's, Mrs. Paradyne went in. Ah, could he ever forget his astonishment at what then took place. She fell on her knees at the bedside; and, pouring out the news she brought, besought him, with tears and kisses and heartfelt lamentations, to forgive her. To forgive her for her conduct to him!

That past calamity, five years ago, falling on her with the fury of an avalanche, seemed to have suddenly changed Mrs. Paradyne's

nature. The sense of disgrace had warped every kindly feeling of her heart, to have brought out all there was within her of selfishness. She had been a proud woman, secure in the self-esteem that arises from a consciousness of ever striving to do well. The blow seemed to have dried up all affection, except for George, her youngest-born, whom she had ever passionately loved; and her time was spent in silently, sometimes openly, reproaching the husband who had so wronged her. Her letters to her eldest son in Germany grew few and cold; she accepted as her due what aid he could send, returning scant thanks for it. When, four years later, he came to Orville, she scarcely received him patiently. She resented his having advised the removal of George to Orville College, now that it was known the Loftus boys and Trace were at the same; and she, from motives of policy, forbade him to own relationship with them, or to call her mother. Were it disclosed that he was a Paradyne, he might no longer be able to work for them. He must

go to the house but once in a way, and then as an acquaintance. But for the ordeal of sorrow he had been passing through for four years, these cruelties might have well nigh gone to break Arthur Paradyne's heart. As it was, they were but additional drops in the cup of bitterness he was draining.

But when the astounding news, that her husband had been innocent, burst upon Mrs. Paradyne, she woke up from her nightmare. With the lifting of the stigma from their heads, all her former kindly nature (it had not been very great) returned; the hard scales fell from her eyes and heart, and she saw how selfish, nay, how cruel, had been her treatment of her eldest son. In nearly the selfsame hour, she received tidings that his sickness—in which she had previously only half-believed—had increased alarmingly; she heard the report that it might end in death. And here she was on her knees at his bedside; the tears streaming from her eyes, kisses from her lips, pouring forth the blessed news, just heard, and be-

seeching him to forgive her; to love her as of yore. It seemed to him that he was repaid for all.

Morning rose. Standing in the quadrangle, that favourite place of theirs, under the early November sun, were the college boys, George Paradyne making one. Strange and startling tidings had just been disclosed to them. The gainer of the Orville, so universally assumed to be Trace, might probably turn out to be somebody else.

For Trace had thrown up the prize, and quitted the college!

Thrown up the Great Orville Prize? Quitted the college? The throng stared stupidly at one another, unable to understand it. And yet it must be true; for the announcement had come to them from the Head Master.

The truth was, poor Raymond Trace, after a whole night's battling with his mortified spirit, had found himself utterly unable to face the disclosure that must be made. If not made at once, it must inevitably, as he

knew, come out later. At six o'clock that morning he was with the Head Master; and before seven he had gone out of the college gates, never to return. At present the boys were in ignorance of any ill; and would be kept so as long as was possible. A report arose, its origin not altogether clear, that Trace was called thus suddenly away by some stupendous business in which his father was engaged in America. The boys were repeating this over to each other, in full belief of its veracity.

The substance of their conversation reached the ears of two gentlemen who were advancing unobserved, arm-in-arm: Sir Simon Orville and Mr. Loftus. "Called away on sudden business!" repeated Sir Simon. "Let 'em think it. As good, that, as any other passing plea. Poor Raymond!"

Bertie Loftus was the first to catch sight of his father. Bertie was as ignorant of recent events as the youngest boy there. He went up with a glow of pleasure on his face, hardly believing the vision could be real.

Dick, dashing in, got the first question. "Papa! papa! what have you come for?"

Mr. Loftus, his tall, slender figure and handsome face presenting a contrast to Sir Simon's, made a sign for the boys to gather round him, and drew George Paradyne to his side. "Sir Simon telegraphed for me on a matter of business," he said to his sons. "But"—turning to the throng—"I have come here this morning to perform an act of justice: one which has been delayed so long through ignorance on my part and fraud on another's, that it seems to me as if vengeance must cry aloud to Heaven. Gentlemen, you have heard of the frauds that George Paradyne's father was accused of perpetrating. Within a few hours we have discovered his innocence. He was innocent as I; and more so: for I, by my culpable negligence, and mistaken trust in another who was guilty, contributed to the mistake. This boy"—laying his hand on George's shoulder—"has been reproached by you as the son of a man of crime: let me

tell you, as I do before Heaven, that his father was a good and honourable gentleman; a brave soldier of his Queen's; a faithful servant of One who is higher than any Queen."

"He has been treated like a dog amidst you," impatiently broke in Sir Simon, drowning the more temperate words of Mr. Loftus, and turning himself about in his own fashion. "You have behaved cantankerously to him, like a cross-grained set, as you are! And now you'll have to eat humble-pie and be ashamed of yourselves. I'd not own any of you; I wouldn't."

In spite of the hard words, there was a humorous sound of excuse in them; the boys detected the good-feeling, laughed, and began to cheer. Mr. Lamb put on his meekest face and drew a little away; and then called out that the college would not have known anything about Paradyne, neither have thought of being hard upon him, but for Trace.

"Just so," cried Sir Simon. "Trace is——"

Mr. Loftus laid his hand upon his impulsive brother-in-law, who might have been about to declare more than was necessary. It was not noticed. The excitement was rising; the hubbub was great. A hundred hands were held out to shake Paradyne's, in atonement for the past; a contrast to the scene of the previous day when the same hands were put forth to strike him. They shouted, they threw their caps in the air: they felt, and with shame, how ill they had behaved to him throughout, how mistaken they had been. George met the hands with his own ready one, with his frank and generous smile; not a bit of malice entertained he. But there was a world of pride in the self-sustained movement with which he threw back his head; in the quiet, self-reliant only words he spoke:

"I always said, you know, that my father was innocent."

CHAPTER XIII.

VERY PEACEFULLY.

HE was dying very peacefully and quietly, very happily, surrounded by his friends. Sir Simon Orville went in perpetually, blustering rather at first, because Mr. Henry—as they still, from old custom, mostly called him—would not be moved to Pond Place, to be made much of for the closing period of his life, and depart out of it in luxury.

"The exertion might be too great for me," he said, clasping Sir Simon's hand gratefully. He sat up in bed still; most likely would to the last. "I am better here in my own poor home, where the boys can run in and out at will. Thank you ever, Sir Simon."

"But I can't make up to you for the fraud, I can't do the slightest thing towards it," remonstrated Sir Simon, who was altogether in a state of repentance for the past, and what it had brought forth—as if it had been any fault of his. "But for that miserable brother-in-law of mine, you might have been hale and healthy now, and flourishing in the world."

"God knows what is best," was the cheering answer of Arthur Paradyne, the same he had made to Trace. And Sir Simon saw that it must be best: for there was a serene light of peace in the eyes, in the face altogether, that worldly honours, be they great as they will, can never bring.

"He has been leading me through the wilderness in His own way," continued Mr. Henry, scarcely above a whisper. "But for the dreadful trouble that fell upon me, I might not have found my road thus early: and then where should I have been now? The doctors think, you know, that under the most prosperous auspices I could not have

lived to be thirty. Oh, Sir Simon, God sees and knows what we do not see, and He has been guiding me home."

"You could be surrounded by so many more comforts at Pond Place," resumed Sir Simon, when he had overcome a troublesome cough.

"But not with more love. I have everything I want, and see how my friends come round me. Not an instant am I left. Before one goes, another comes. Sometimes," he added, with a gay smile, "they arrive as if it were a levée, and we have to borrow Mother Butter's kitchen chairs. My mother and Mary are here nearly always; Dr. Brabazon and his daughter come, my pupil Rose comes, the masters come, the boys come, and you come, you know, Sir Simon. How could I be better off?"

"I should have liked you to get well and live, that I might do something for you; set you up in a coach-and-four, or some little thing of that sort," contended Sir Simon, with an expression of face half cross, half pietous.

Mr. Henry shook his head with a smile: coaches-and-four don't always bring happiness with them, or drive their owners on the best road to it. "Could any one have been more bountiful than you, Sir Simon? You have——"

"Tush!" crossly interrupted Sir Simon. "Is it not my duty to do it, as Robert Trace cannot? 'Twould be a second fraud on my part if I didn't."

The allusion was this. Sir Simon Orville had hastened to announce his intention of refunding to Mrs. Paradyne, and with interest, the three thousand pounds her husband had put into the Liverpool firm, and which had been lost in the vortex. Not only that: he avowed that George's future education and career should be his care.

"Why did you not confide in me?" cried Sir Simon. "Why did you not tell me you were a Paradyne. I'd have helped you on."

"Tell you, Sir Simon! It seemed to me always a species of fraud on my part to re-

ceive the many little favours you were ever wishing to show me."

"The odd thing to me is, that you should have so fully put credence in your father's guilt," observed Sir Simon. "Knowing him as you did."

A slight flush, as of remorse, shone in the fading cheeks. No opportunity had been given him of believing otherwise. His mother, so impressed with it herself, had succeeded in imparting her impressions to him, beyond possibility of doubt.

"Where is Raymond Trace, Sir Simon?" he asked in a whisper. "I should so like to have seen him again. He said he would come, but he did not."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Sir Simon confidentially. "Robert Trace is in hiding about twenty miles off, and Raymond with him: they are not out of England, as some suppose; Hopper for one. When the explosion arose, we were all confused together; as was but natural. Robert Trace thought he must escape from Hopper; and I—to say the truth

—winked at it. It was not my place to show 'em up to the Lord Mayor; and if a thousand pounds or so——But never mind that now. When we came to talk matters over sensibly and coolly, I and Mr. Loftus, we saw that he could not be made criminally responsible, except Mr. Loftus chose to do it, for the frauds had been against the firm; and other liabilities were all paid. We have privately seen Robert Trace (mind, this is between ourselves) and advised him to face it, and I think he will. He says he'll be made a bankrupt."

"And Hopper?"

"Hopper will be floored—as he deserves to be. Not a single penny shall he get out of me."

"But he will make Mr. Trace's fraud known, out of revenge, Sir Simon!"

"It is known already, known by this time to the very length and breadth of the land. You don't suppose Mr. Loftus would suffer your father's name to lie a day under its obloquy! Not he: if Loftus has a proud

nature, it is a just one. And so is Bertie's."

"And generous too," cried Mr. Henry, his face flushing with its old pleasant light. "Bertie never once insulted George by a look or a word; but stood by him quietly in many ways, smoothing things for him. He will make a good and brave man. He comes here every day to sit with me. I think the duel did him good. It took some of the assumption out of his spirit."

Down sat Sir Simon with a burst of laughter. That duel, now that he had overcome the horror it brought to him at the time, was a rich joke. Gall and Bertie winced at its remembrance still. But they had been firm friends since.

The days went on. Mr. Henry had more visitors than he sometimes knew what to do with. His mother was there often; Mary occasionally, as she could spare time from her occupations with Miss Rose Brabazon, whose resident governess she was now. Mrs. Paradyne was eating the bitter bread

of repentance: the mistaken line of conduct she had pursued to him, her eldest and dutiful son, grew harder and harder to reflect upon. She could not say so; it distressed him too much, and she sat mostly in silence, letting him hold her hand, yearningly wishing she might recall the past. Too late; too late. She could not stop the course of the rapid disease; she could not prolong his life, or bring back the isolated days he had been condemned to pass, or the weary nights of labour in which he had wasted his delicate frame: the sensitive spirit had been wounded to the quick; the tender heart flung back upon itself. It had been all good for him, no doubt; necessary adjuncts to that process of purification his spirit had been unconsciously undergoing for its coming flight to a better world, but which Mrs. Paradyne could never forgive herself. The deceit she had forced him to observe in regard to his identity had told upon him, there was no doubt, more than any other untoward circumstance: and Mrs. Paradyne

had the comfort of knowing that she had helped—on the end. He was, so to say, living a lie; it was altogether wrong, unjustifiable, little better than a fraud on the Head Master; and neither his health nor his natural integrity could bear up against it. And so, Mrs. Paradyne sat by his bedside in silence; she and her aching heart. Now that the relationship was known, people could trace the likeness in their faces; which had once puzzled Miss Brabazon.

And there was another who would come and sit by him, and take his hand; and, closing the door, read to him words from the Book of Life—and that was Dr. Brabazon. The doctor saw the prize that he was losing: he knew now, if he had never known it before, how valuable Mr. Henry's precepts had been in the school, and the peace he contrived to shed around amidst warring elements. Other things were known to the doctor now: the sojourn of his ill-doing son in the house, and the kind friend Mr. Henry had been to him. It seemed to

have made Tom into a better man; and he went off to Australia in a spirit of reformation that Mrs. Butter, in a satirical spirit, "hoped would last."

Rose ran in and out at will, bringing him flowers. One day she came to him with a great trouble—Emma had found her love-letters, and she was never, never to write or receive more. Well, Mr. Henry said smiling, as he pushed her pretty hair off her brow, she was certainly getting too old for it.

Emma Brabazon would come sometimes, and lift the little table to the bedside, and make tea at it. She was cheerful now, gay even, for a great care had been removed from her; she would call him Dr. Henry, or Professor Paradyne, and laugh over that back suspicion connected with the gold pencil, now safe in the Head Master's pocket. She confessed to him that she had had great fears, at the time Lord Shrewsbury was shot, that it might be her brother who had fired the pistol. "Not intentionally, to do

harm, you know," she added; "but he was often down here, wandering about the plantation, in the hope of meeting me and getting money from me, and it was so easy for him to have picked up the pistol."

"Be at rest," said Mr. Henry. "It was not your brother."

Miss Brabazon was surprised at the assured tones. "You know who it was?"

"It was one of the college boys. Do not ask me more, for that is all I can say." He intended to carry the secret with him to his grave. And might have done it, had it lain alone with him.

Of all his casual visitors, he liked best to see the boys. He would cause them to sit close to him, and talk pleasantly of the journey of life on which, after this half-year, some of them would be entering. Not one but treasured his words; not one but would remember them to profit in the busy battle to come.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE END.

A DAY in December. The fine old hall was decorated as for a festival. Ordinary signs and appurtenances were put out of it; desks were not; books, slates, ink, canes, all had disappeared. The boys wore their gowns; the masters were all suavity; and James Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, had a bit of blue ribbon in his button-hole, the badge of the Orville Prize. From his chair of state the Head Master had just announced him as the victor, and decorated him with its sign. It had been virtually known for some weeks that Talbot would have it, but this was the formal investiture.

The term was drawing to its end: Mr. Henry, in his proximate dwelling, was drawing near to his. On the day but one following this, the school would disperse. Gall, Loftus major, Brown, Talbot, and others who have less concerned us, were quitting the place for ever. Mr. Henry had been considerably better for some days; he had been up, and even walked in the garden. It was the flickering of the candle's flame before going out.

Mr. Trace had just sailed for America, taking Raymond with him. The full particulars of the past frauds had been for some time known; and the unhappy man had never come out of hiding. He had nothing to fear, legally or criminally, but he could not face the world. Not until this morning, when the news of their sailing for New York reached the boys, had they given up the hope that Raymond might come up to say farewell. And Mr. Lamb, as you will see, intended to take advantage of the fact of his departure. Hopper had disappeared from

Orville; nobody knew or cared where. Sir Simon had made short work of his refusal to give him money: though it was very generally suspected that he had again substantially assisted his brother-in-law, Robert Trace.

The ceremony of formally investing Talbot with the bit of blue ribbon was over, and the masters left the hall. Up rose the boys with their shouts of congratulation.

"Long live the Earl of Shrewsbury!"

The earl laughed, and held his hands above his head. "Don't hail me," said he jestingly, "I have but stepped into another's cast-off shoes. Trace gained the prize."

"If hailing goes by deserts, you should hail Paradyne," interposed Gall. "But for his withdrawal, Trace would have come off second-best. I know it."

"I'll shake hands with the whole of you with pleasure as Trace's deputy," heartily called out George Paradyne.

Lamb stepped forward. Never had his face been more virtuous, his voice so candid.

"I can't let the opportunity pass without declaring a thing that is in my keeping," he smoothly began. "In that matter of the pistol, fifteen months ago, when Lord Shrewsbury was shot—you all remember it well. It was Trace who did it."

Gall wheeled round on Lamb. The rest stood in wonder, listening for more.

"And it was Trace who inked that Latin essay of Paradyne's," continued the estimable young man. "I *saw* him do that, and I know he did the other. As he is gone, it's as well the truth should be known. Trace was a sneak."

A good swinging blow in the chest, which sent Mr. Lamb staggering backwards. It came from Bertie Loftus. Never before had Bertie been seen to strike gratuitously.

"You are the sneak," he said to Lamb. "Can't you let a fallen fellow alone? Trace is in misfortune, and absent. But for that, you'd not have dared to traduce him, you coward."

"It was he who fired off the pistol,"

roared Lamb, smarting under the blow. "I swear it was. There! It's only lately I got to suspect it, and I taxed Trace with it the morning he left, and he couldn't deny it: he did't seem to care to; he was too down. You hold your row, Loftus major."

In dodging away from Bertie, Mr. Lamb contrived to back amidst the throng, and tread upon their feet. It only wanted that to set them on. This last announcement, so exceedingly characteristic of him, was as the climax of his sins, and they thought the time had come to pay him out. Trace had never been a favourite; and perhaps he really had something of the sneak about him; but this did not make Lamb less of one. Hissing, pushing, striking, calling him every derisive name they could lay their tongues on, buffeting, kicking, the lot set to on the miserable Lamb. And Bertie helped in it.

His ears were tingling, his hair was pulled, his eyes were smarting. One whacked him here, another kicked him yonder; his back

was already growing blue; his voice, poor wretch, was raised in a howl, piteously shrieking for quarter. Suddenly the onslaught was interrupted. Somebody had interposed to part them, and so stopped the fray. One look round, and the boys fell back in very astonishment.

It was their dear old master, Mr. Henry—for dear in truth he had become to them. A little worn, shadowy, looking taller than he used; but with the same kind and gentle face, the same loving gaze from the luminous eyes. Sir Simon stood behind.

"I thought I would try and get as far once more; and my good friend, Sir Simon, helped me with his arm," said Mr. Henry, speaking so very quietly that a sudden hush seemed to fall upon the room. "But I did not expect to find you *thus*."

As if in excuse, and perhaps a little ashamed of the turmoil, a score of voices avowed the cause. Lamb stood to his creed; and Sir Simon's ears were regaled with Raymond Trace's private misdoings in

the past. Perhaps it did not much surprise him.

"It does not excuse Lamb," said Gall, his eyes flashing indignation on the latter, who stood cowering behind.

"It was Lamb who told about the smoking that time," called out Leek with indignation.

"He's a wretched coward." And the boys began to hiss again.

"Forgive him for my sake," said Mr. Henry, throwing oil on the troubled waters. "Next term he will do better perhaps; he will have learnt a lesson."

"He'd better not come back! he'd better not show his face here again!" growled the boys.

"I'm not coming back," retorted Lamb.

"But to think that Trace——"

"Hush, hush," interrupted Mr. Henry. "We must have peace and pleasantness to-day. How can we expect mercy for our own faults if we do not show it to one another? If you only knew how pleasant it is to do a

kindness instead of an injury! Try it, Lamb, in future."

Lamb's only answer was to steal out of the room surreptitiously, as quickly as his stiffness allowed. He had not enjoyed his bonneting. Sir Simon Orville went up to Talbot, and fastened a gold watch and chain to his waistcoat.

"My present comes opportunely," he remarked, "since you were on the subject of the pistol. You may remember that I offered a gold watch and chain to whosoever should track out the shooter of Talbot. But what do you think I did, boys?—I'm nothing better than a plain old goose, you know.—I went and bought the watch and chain, never supposing but somebody would turn up to win it the next day. He didn't turn up, and I've had it by me ever since, lying useless. It crossed my mind once to give it to my friend Onions here,"—with a nod to Mr. Leek—"for his services in a certain duel you've heard of; but I hadn't got it with me in Boulogne; and, besides,

he has a handsome gold watch of his own. So then I determined to keep it for the winner of the Orville; and I've brought it. It seems consistent with poetical justice that it should be Talbot's at last, since he was the one damaged by the shots. Long life to you, my brave earl, to wear it out!"

"Not to me, sir," said the earl, flushing with delight, but just and generous in the midst of it. "It is true I have got the Orville, but Paradyne merited it. He gave up the contest voluntarily—and he has not a watch any more than I have."

"I'll take care of Paradyne," said Sir Simon, with a significant nod. "He'll miss neither the watch nor the Orville, and he goes to Cambridge when you go to Oxford. I'm a plain man and like Cambridge best. Wear your watch with content, my boy: your name is on it, and you have deserved it."

A deafening cheer followed Sir Simon as he went out. Mr. Henry stayed behind. Sitting down on a bench, he gathered them

round him, his low clear voice echoing on their ears and hearts with a strangely peaceful echo, as he talked of the journey he was so close upon; of the one they must all take in their turn, and of many little things that would speed their packing up for it. In the middle of this, to the general consternation, Dick Loftus broke into sobs, and dropped his head upon Mr. Henry's arms. Dick came to himself in a few moments. Feeling intensely ashamed, he made a feint of carrying off things with a careless hand.

"Don't you go and die yet. We shouldn't like it, you know. Wait till we are off. And couldn't you leave us something as a legacy?"

"Oh yes! leave us a legacy," cried the rest, ready for any suggestion of that sort.

"A legacy?" repeated Mr. Henry, smiling. "Very well. What kind of legacy?"

They ran over different articles, each in his mind, from a gold watch and chain like

Lord Shrewsbury's, to a lock of Mr. Henry's hair. But nobody mentioned one thing in particular. "Anything you like," said the boys.

He smiled still, and rose; shaking hands with each of them, saying a tender word of encouragement to all; and went out, leaning on Gall's arm, Bertie walking on the other side. Ah, what a contrast it was! They, so full of life, of its interests and passions; he, so near its close.

Nearer than they thought. On the following morning when they were at breakfast, crowing over the premature departure of Mr. Lamb, who had declined to face the school again, the Head Master walked in and imparted the news.

They were allowed to go and see him. He lay on the bed where he had died. His face was perfectly beautiful from its look of intense peace, almost as if a halo of glory were around it. No wonder: he had gone to the God and Saviour whom he served. With hushed breath and softened hearts,

they stood gazing on him, very conscious just then that their time must also come. He had but gone on a little while in advance —as he told them the previous afternoon in the college hall.

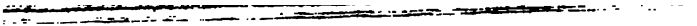
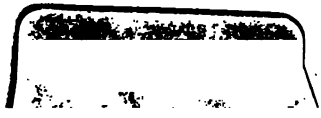
They were returning to their homes that day or the following: to their Christmas festivities, the puddings, the games, the gaieties, all to be merry; just as you are at this very present time. Some few would never come back to Orville College; they were about to be launched forth on their several ways of life. A tempting prospect to look forward to: but a conscious voice within them was whispering that *he* was happier in his early death, than they who had yet the battle and the strife to encounter. God defend them in it, and keep them for Himself! As He had kept him, who lay there.

And the promised legacy? As they filed noiselessly out, a folded paper was put into Gall's hand. It was headed "The legacy to my dear friends and pupils." He had sat

up in bed the previous night to write it. It proved to be a small portion of the thirteenth chapter of St. John, in his own beautiful handwriting, and signed with his full name, "Arthur Henry Paradyne."

"*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

Gall reverently folded the paper, and they passed out of the house, putting on their trenchers. "We'll have it framed," said he, "and hang it in the hall. Us senior fellows will be gone, but we can come in sometimes, and look at it."

Oh, boys! my dear young fellow-workers for whom I have written this story! Do you strive, earnestly and patiently, to do your duty in this world; and take that legacy home to your hearts!

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